JANUARY 3, 2000

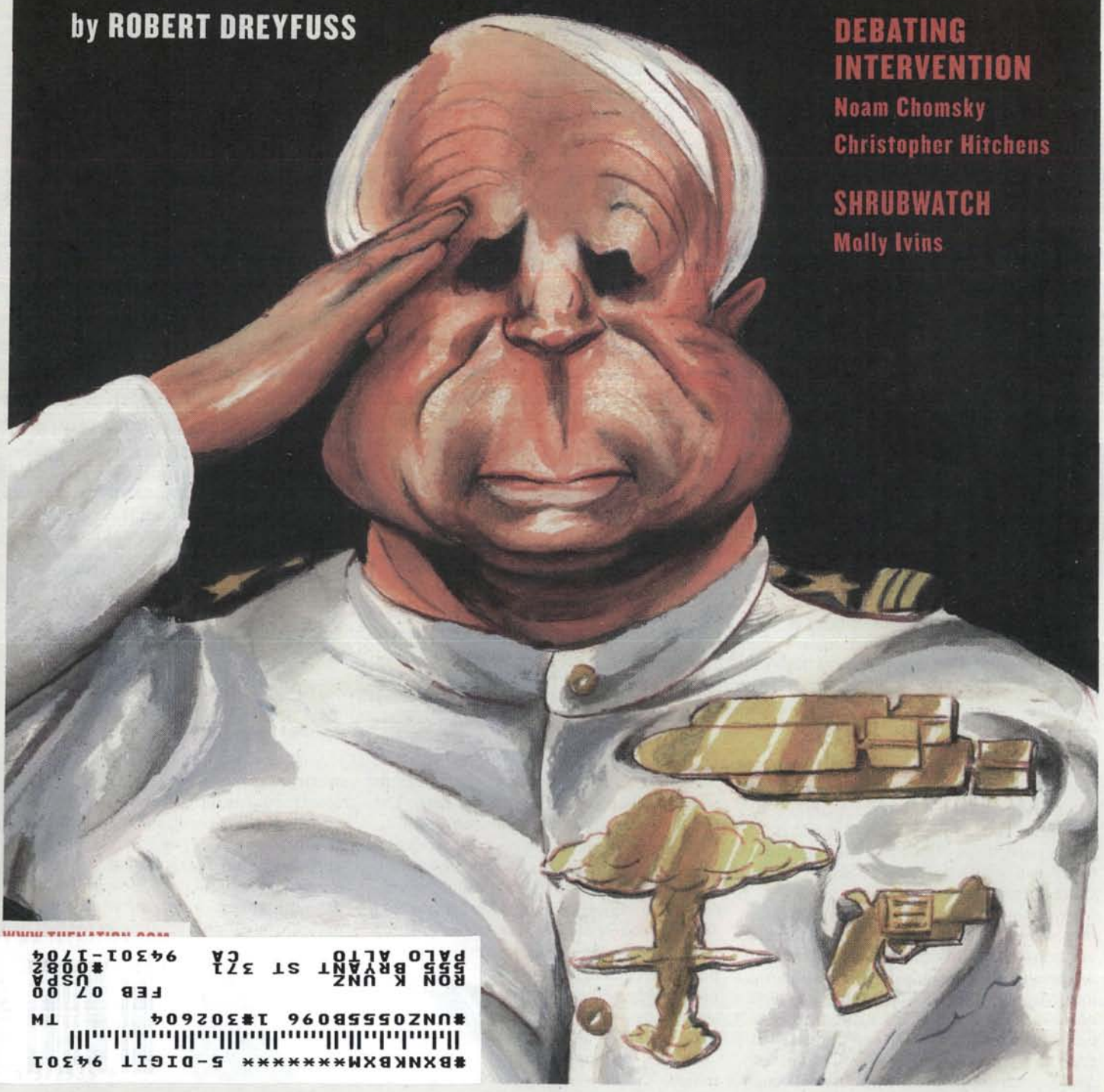
Who 'Lost' Russia? · Robert V. Daniels

$2.75 US/$3.75 CANADA

The Nation.

McCAIN'S VIETNAM

by ROBERT DREYFUSS



DEBATING INTERVENTION

Noam Chomsky

Christopher Hitchens

SHRUBWATCH

Molly Ivins

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STEVE BRODNER

LETTERS

THE 'SINGLE STANDARD' IN KOSOVO

Cambridge, Mass.

■ Christopher Hitchens points out, correctly of course, that it would be a fallacy to condemn NATO's bombing on grounds of "double standards" ["Minority Report," Nov. 29]. He attributes this silly argument to my book *The New Military Humanism*, which stresses—insistently and unambiguously—that the question of what to do in Kosovo must be evaluated on its own; the standards of the leadership are a different (though not irrelevant) matter. It says, furthermore, that these distinctions are "the merest truisms." The same is true of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and others discussed; furthermore, support for such interventions would entail no belief in "double standards," again the merest truism.

It is in the context of assessing intentions that the issue of double standards arises. There is a double standard only if the intentions are humanitarian. That question has to be addressed, not begged, as in Hitchens's presupposition that Washington's goals were benign (hence a "double standard").

My book found no evidence of benign intent in the current cases reviewed, including those he mentions; hence no double standard but rather the familiar single standard of pursuit of power interests with little concern for human consequences. That includes US support for Indonesian terror into late 1999 and Clinton's success in escalating large-scale atrocities and ethnic cleansing within NATO itself through the 1990s, among other examples. It also includes the decision to bomb Yugoslavia with the expectation, quickly confirmed, that the bombing would provoke a sharp escalation of atrocities and brutal expulsions, while defunding the agency responsible for refugee care; and also Washington's retreat from its most provocative demands and acceptance (on paper) of peace accords that are a compromise between the options on the table as the bombing began.

The book also reviews the refusal of defenders of the NATO bombing to offer credible reasons for their advocacy of state violence, their consistent evasion of the crucial issues and their practice of constructing absurd fallacies to condemn instead of confronting fact and argument.

The issues are too serious to be treated in this manner.

On the separate question of whether to bomb, Hitchens offers one argument: The bombing that led to the expulsions was justified on the basis of Serbia's "contingency plans" (which it doubtless had, the book notes). The implications are startling. Consider current US strategic doctrine reviewed in the book, or Israel's likely plans for the Arab population if the country comes under threat, or Indonesia's post-referendum plans for East Timor (and presumably within its official territory). Do such plans justify bombing in these and similar cases?

Again, the same conclusion seems warranted.

NOAM CHOMSKY

HITCHENS REPLIES

Washington, D.C.

■ It is no disgrace to be condescended to by Noam Chomsky nor to be instructed in matters of formal logic and argumentative procedure. However, the distinction between standards and intentions may not be as rigid as he insists. On page 48 of his book *The New Military Humanism*, we find the following:

> Before proceeding, we might take note of a simple point of logic. When a humanitarian crisis develops, outsiders have three choices:
>
> (I) act to escalate the catastrophe
>
> (II) do nothing
>
> (III) try to mitigate the catastrophe
>
> Kosovo falls under category (I), East Timor in 1999 under (II).

Since on page 45 Chomsky had already asserted that "no call has been heard from the New Humanists for withdrawal of Indonesian military forces [from East Timor] or for sending a meaningful UN observer force," was I not somewhat justified in saying that he rests much of his opposition to the Kosovo intervention on the argument from double standards? I took care at the time to allow for the fact that Chomsky's book was written before the UN-supervised withdrawal of Indonesian forces from East Timor; an outcome, incidentally, that I ("new humanist" or not) believe to have been shamefully overdue. I wondered then how Chomsky would evaluate either the call for

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EDITORIALS

Shades of the Cold War

As celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall fade, is there a revival of American cold war attitudes? A series of recent bumps in US-Russia relations have provoked comparisons to those dead days. Washington and Western Europe denounce Moscow for brutally suppressing an uprising in Chechnya, and Moscow snarls back that its anti-"bandit" campaign is neither America's nor the world's business.

Boris Yeltsin totters to Beijing seeking to revive the Sino-Soviet alliance and reminds President Clinton that Russia is a great power with a "full nuclear arsenal." Moscow expels a US diplomat on spying charges, and a week or so later, the United States kicks out a Russian caught loitering in front of the State Department, allegedly to listen to a bug in a conference room. A custody battle over a 6-year-old Cuban boy mushrooms into an international incident, provoking atavistic anticommunist posturings. And Wen Ho Lee is arrested after months of rumors that he purloined nuclear secrets from the Los Alamos weapons laboratory.

Reality check. Chechnya is not Hungary or Afghanistan, and Western condemnation, an appropriate response to Russia's dirty war, made the Russians halt, at least temporarily, the savage bombardment of Grozny to give civilians a chance to flee. US spokespersons deny that the recent expulsions of diplomats from Moscow and Washington on espionage charges was tit for tat, and anyway, spying goes on whatever the diplomatic weather. As for Wen Ho Lee, he was charged not with espionage but with security violations for downloading secret material onto his desktop computer, arousing suspicions that he was singled out because of his ethnicity and to defang the demagogy of the GOP China-is-the-enemy bloc in Congress.

No, it's not déjà vu all over again. What is troubling, though, is that US-Russia relations have been on a downward spiral, in large part because of Administration actions that have humiliated and isolated Moscow: NATO expansion, a NATO war in Kosovo, the threat to develop a missile-defense system and to unilaterally revise the ABM treaty, and, most recently, the decision to build a pipeline that would bypass Russia in transporting Caspian Sea oil, which Moscow perceives as a direct assault on its vital interests.

Such actions can only generate further tensions between the two nuclear powers. Yeltsin's nuke-rattling was partly bluster for home consumption, but it is a reminder that the threat of nuclear annihilation—the sinister heart of the cold war—is still alive. Indeed, the nuclear danger today is greater because of Russia's growing instability. That is why US nuclear policy and relations with Russia should be Topic A in the presidential debates. Thus far, only Bill Bradley has had the realism to warn of the potential destabilizing effects of missile defense, which, aside from its highly dubious efficacy, will inevitably provoke dangerous Russian countermeasures. The United States should permanently freeze NATO expansion, and, as Bradley has also suggested, it should begin negotiations on Start III, leading to deeper missile cuts than does the still unratified Start II.

The cold war is not back, but our leaders—and those who would lead us—should be talking about and debating how best to deal with the lingering nuclear threat that is its chilling legacy.

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the third week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2000 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Subscription Price: 1 year, $52; 2 years, $90. Add $18 for surface mail postage outside U.S. **Please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues $4 prepaid ($5 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. This issue went to press on December 15. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

INTERNET: The Nation is available on Thursday by 12:00 midnight Eastern Time, at www.thenation.com
E-MAIL: info@thenation.com. Letters to the Editor: letters@thenation.com.

Shrubwatch

Austin

Every now and again Shrub W. Bush will stop you faster than pullin' on the whoa reins. You can go along for long periods thinkin' to yourself, "Don't agree with him about dog, but he seems like an amiable fellow." And then he says something that sort of makes your teeth hurt.

One time W. got to describin' the first time he ran for office—the Boy Bush was an unsuccessful candidate for Congress in 1978 out in West Texas—George Mahon's old seat, district runs from Lubbock to Midland/Odessa to hell and gone. Dubya allowed the race had startled his friends: "They were a little confused about why I was doing this, but at that time, Jimmy Carter was President, and he was trying to control natural gas prices, and I felt the United States was headed toward European-style socialism."

So there you are, trying to envision the very Baptist Brother Carter as a "European-style socialist." Well, Carter does build homes for poor folk without charging, and if that doesn't prove it, what would? Besides, West Texas oilmen, of which W. was one at the time, think everyone to the left of Trent Lott is a socialist. Reminds me of a story. One time in those very same years the ineffable Good Time Charlie Wilson and Bob Krueger, a Shakespeare scholar last seen in a political ad imitating Arnold Schwarzenegger—two of the finest minds the Peculiar State has ever sent to Congress—cooked up a scheme to deregulate the price of natural gas in such a way that everybody in West Texas would get stinking rich and all you Yankees would have to pay through the nose. They were delicately tap-dancing this masterpiece of reverse socialism through the Commerce Committee one afternoon by the time-tested ploy of sending everyone to sleep (the ploy works best right after lunch) with excruciatingly boring testimony. Wilson swears every Yankee on the committee was snoring when, to his horror, the late Jim Collins, a Dallas Republican, came to and caught the fatal words "gas prices."

"Gas prices?! Gas prices?!" shrieked Collins, waking up all the napping Yankees. "We wouldn't have gas prices this high if it weren't for all this school busing. It's school busing, busing all these Nigras and all these little white children for integration, that's what's driving up gas prices!" And he was off on an anti-busing rant that would not quit. By this time, both Wilson and Krueger were on their hands and knees under the table trying to unplug Collins's mike, but it was too late. The Yankees promptly voted to squelch deregulation of natural gas under the impression that they were carrying on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Collins is the man who once moved me, in the days when I wrote for the *Dallas Times Herald*, to observe, "If his IQ slips any lower, we'll have to water him twice a day."

Probably the best known of the "whoa" moments with W. Bush comes from an interview with Tucker Carlson printed in *Talk* magazine, concerning the execution of Karla Faye Tucker. Bush has now signed more than 100 warrants of execution, but, as

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you may recall, the born-again Tucker drew attention both for being female and for having an extensive prison ministry.

> In the weeks before the execution, Bush says, Bianca Jagger and a number of other protesters came to Austin to demand clemency for Tucker. "Did you meet with any of them?" I ask. Bush whips around and stares at me. "No, I didn't meet with any of them," he snaps, as though I've just asked the dumbest, most offensive question ever posed. "I didn't meet with Larry King either when he came down for it. I watched his interview with [Tucker], though. He asked her real difficult questions like, "What would you say to Governor Bush?"
>
> "What was her answer?" I wonder.
>
> "Please," Bush whimpers, his lips pursed in mock desperation, "don't kill me."
>
> I must look shocked—ridiculing the pleas of a condemned prisoner who has since been executed seems odd and cruel, even for someone as militantly anticrime as Bush—because he immediately stops smirking.

Tucker also reported that the exchange mimicked by Bush never took place; Bush made it up.

Well, that was a moment.

Another came during one of Bush's rare appearances on a Sunday chat show. (Ann Richards used to call him "the phantom candidate"; political reporters on his national campaign say he is "in the bubble," rarely let out for an unscripted performance.) Tim Russert asked Bush who on the Supreme Court he most admired. "Scalia," said Bush promptly. And after a second's thought, "and Clarence Thomas."

He sure can pick 'em. If you are a heavy-duty right-winger, as opposed to the moderate, compassionate conservative, Scalia is a good pick. First-rate mind, hideous politics. But no one covering the Court, regardless of politics, has ever chosen Clarence Thomas as a standout. The best I've ever seen written about him, by people who consider Scalia a great Justice, is that he's adequate. Everyone else, including those of no noticeable ideological persuasion, considers "adequate" far too kind.

Thomas, of course, was W.'s daddy's pick. I don't do Siggie Freud myself, being completely unqualified. I leave that to such great minds as Gail Sheehy. But W. does have a daddy problem. Pretty much the entire record of his life is daddy, but it's not his fault. His name is not George W. Smith: What the hell was he supposed to do? Be a big enough fool to throw it all away? Nevertheless, it does sometimes trap him into ridiculous positions.

Twice in the past few weeks we've seen Bush, as we so rarely do, outside the bubble in "debate" with fellow Republican candidates. Myself, I think mah fellow pundits have been entirely too polite. In the first Republican debate in New Hampshire, Bush was, at best, "adequate." In the Arizona debate, he was just bloody awful. Call a spade a spade, troops. If you will pardon a personal note here, I was in hospital, facing a delayed surgical proceeding, during the entire hour-and-a-half debate, and by the end of it, I was screaming, "Put me under the knife! I can't take any more!"

A note here for those of you who will be following "Shrub-watch" in the coming weeks. I am a Texan, and we are notoriously soft on our own: I drew the line at Phil Gramm (who wouldn't?), but I can still give a lecture on the virtues of John Connally (when he was a Democrat) on occasion. Texas liberals (screw you, it's not an oxymoron) are persons of large political tolerance. I may intervene from time to time to explain certain political/cultural phenomena—such as why W. Bush keeps leaning into people and touching them—but I plan to limit myself mostly to the geopolitical terrain with which I am most familiar. I know what kind of governor this guy has been—if you expect him to do for the nation what he has for Texas, we need to talk. MOLLY IVINS

Molly Ivins is a Nation *contributing editor.*

Seattle From the Seine

"*Le monde n'est pas une marchandise*"—the world is not a commodity—proclaimed the large banner in the Parisian demonstration against the WTO. Seen from Paris, what happened in Seattle was striking. It was the revolt of citizens against governments that instead of being their servants are the servants of the multinational corporations. It was a movement from below, across frontiers, against the powers that be.

For years Western Europeans have been told that they must not only accept the existing system but also endorse its latest version, the American model. Since, in practical terms, that implied the dismantling of their welfare state, it met real resistance. The first blow against TINA—the resigned acceptance that There Is No Alternative—was delivered by the French, in their winter of discontent of 1995, when the protesters said in substance: "If that is the future you are offering us, to hell with your future!" That refusal was momentous, because as long as people believe there is no way out, they will not be looking for one. Yet, so far, the French movement has failed to gather momentum and to outline an alternative, possibly because it lacked a global perspective. Now comes Seattle, with Americans leading the battle against the American model, to provide an international dimension.

For radicals opposing the Maastricht Treaty on one side of the ocean or NAFTA on the other, it was imperative that their stand not be confused with the jingoist opposition of the ultra-right—of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Pat Buchanan or even the Tory Euroskeptics. We must not put the blame for the ills of our society on the alien, the stranger. And we must, while we defend our "sovereignty" against the encroachment of big business, make it plain that we are ready to give it up for the sake of collaboration with labor unions and other rank-and-file organizations. In the battle against the WTO, this rhetoric was turned into practice. The community across frontiers was shown when part of the money needed to free José Bové—jailed in France because he took part in the symbolic dismantling of a McDonald's—was raised by the National Family Farm Coalition, and when the same Bové—turned hero overnight because his attack on *malbouffe* (bad food) struck a deep chord—refused to be used by the French government propagandists; he was against export subsidies, because they favored the big farmers, agribusiness, the corporations. The struggle against multinationals and against *malbouffe* knows no frontiers. Viewed from the Seine, the protesters in Seattle—the

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unionists and the ecologists—seemed united, and kids from "have" nations fought for the damned of the earth against their own multinationals.

Let us not get carried away. The tasks ahead are tremendous. Wages and working conditions in the Third World will not be the only divisive issue. If we allow the profit-driven expansion to continue, we shall soon reach the ecological limits of the planet. The Western nations cannot tell the Chinese or the Indians not to do what we are doing; if we want to survive together we must reshape fundamentally our own patterns of production and consumption. Yet we are intellectually and politically unprepared for such an exercise.

¡NO PROBLEMA!

There's a simple way out of the controversy over Elián González, the Cuban boy rescued at sea and brought to Miami by the Coast Guard. The INS apparently erred when it granted a 5-year-old not in the custody of a parent or guardian a permanent-status visa under the "reach the beach" law, which allows fleeing Cubans who make landfall to remain in the United States. Under a 1995 immigration accord with Cuba, Cubans intercepted on the high seas are returned to Cuba, even when they are first taken to the States for medical treatment, and anyone who reaches shore courtesy of a smuggler—Elián's mother, who drowned, had hired a smuggler to help her and her son leave Cuba—is supposed to be returned (a provision intended to discourage profiteering and unsafe smuggling operations). This dispute was sparked by a bureaucratic screw-up. But that has not stopped the anti-Castro Cuban exile community from claiming the boy as ammunition against Fidel. Its leaders and Elián's relatives in the States have asserted that Elian's future would be brighter were he kept apart from his father and raised in the land of DisneyWorld and Toys 'R' Us. His family in the United States even offered Elián $2 million if he stays.

If all the fuss is motivated by concern for the child's future, then how about this compromise: Adhering to family values, immigration regulations and the fundamentals of custody law, the United States should send the boy back to his father. But the United States can promise that a permanent-status visa awaits the boy when he is 18. (Maybe by then, there will no longer be extraordinary restrictions on travel between the two nations.) Also, Elián's US-based relatives should take that $2 million and place it in a trust fund for him. With that nest egg, even if he decides to live in Cuba as an adult, his prospects would be much enhanced. Moreover, if his friends and family here care about his immediate future, they can wire him money when he is back in Cuba. US law allows a person in the United States to send $1,200 a year to a household in Cuba. Imagine if all those who are demanding that Elián stay in America sent him dollars (which go far in Cuba) every year. The boy could have it all: his father, financial security and entry to the United States. DAVID CORN

As the events unfolded in Seattle, a small cultural Franco-German television channel broadcast a recorded dialogue between two of Europe's most famous protesters: Günter Grass, this year's winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who for years has used his prestige to help the expression of dissent. They criticized the extraordinary hold the ruling ideology now has, thanks to the media, on people's minds. They condemned the submission or cowardice of their fellow intellectuals. They deplored the fact that trade unionists cannot organize across frontiers even within the European Union.

It wouldn't be difficult to expand their gloomy perspective. The establishment, clearly taken aback by the sweep and scope of popular discontent, is getting its mighty propaganda machine ready for the counteroffensive. Nor will it be easy to tame the financial Frankenstein unleashed in the recent period. Among the French associations mobilizing against the WTO is an interesting newcomer—ATTAC. Barely two years old, it has 130 local committees and more than 16,000 members. Its primary purpose is to advocate the introduction of a tax on international financial transactions, known as the Tobin tax because it was originally suggested by James Tobin, Nobel laureate in economics. It is no revolutionary measure—merely "some sand into the wheels," in Tobin's words—but it is resisted tooth and nail by the financial establishment as dangerously utopian. In any case, there is a long way from the Tobin tax to a world that is not a commodity.

And yet the protesters in Seattle and beyond have revived the forgotten belief that people can shape things through collective action. Despite the odds, they have set the agenda for the coming millennium by reminding us that there are many people on this planet ready to struggle from below against their own governments and corporations and for a different world—one in which human beings will no longer be merchandise. DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer, The Nation*'s Europe correspondent, is author of* Whose Millennium? Theirs or Ours? *(Monthly Review).*

Joseph Heller

Joe Heller once told me the following. Having submitted the manuscript of his first novel, he was invited to a meeting by his editor, Robert Gottlieb, who lost no time in telling him that it had been accepted. There was, however, a problem with the title. The same publishing house was already scheduled to bring out Leon Uris's *Mila 18*. Two books, both about World War II, both by Jewish authors and both with 18 on the cover, wouldn't do. "So I'm very much afraid, Mr. Heller, that your *Catch-18* title will need to be changed." "Whaddaya suggest?" was Joe's approximate response. "Well, I've given it considerable thought, and I believe that the alliteration of Catch-22 would be an apt one."

Is it thinkable that America's ludic Kafka would have scored so massively with any phrase other than the numinously hieroglyphic 22? I like to believe that he might. As it was, the book didn't get much of a reception (except from Nelson Algren in *The Nation*, who called it "the best American novel to come out

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of World War II") and achieved most of its effect by bush telegraph. And the timing had an unusual felicity, helping to curtain-raise what nobody knew would be The Sixties. By the time I read, in an AP dispatch from Vietnam in 1968, that the village of Ben Tre had had to be destroyed in order to save it, I and countless others had been well prepared for such news from the dark frontiers of Absurdistan, and prepared by reading Heller. Having endless times been asked, by schoolmasters, military cadet instructors and other purveyors of the literal and banal: "Look here, Hitchens, what would happen if everyone thought like you?" I came across Yossarian's riposte to this eternal interrogatory (which was roughly, Why, then, I'd be a damn fool to think any other way, wouldn't I?) and sent the book hurtling skywards with a yell of triumph. Yes! That's the stuff to give them! And who didn't think of Milo Minderbinder when they read about the Oliver North network; trading with the enemy to furnish the goods and services to finance treason and terrorism?

Heller's underrated later works, especially *Good as Gold* and *Something Happened*, can be treasured for their persisting stoicism and wit in the face of the random and the capricious. Heller never became a *Commentary* kvetch like so many of his peers; his hatred for men like Nixon and Kissinger had a nice purity and integrity to it. A gruesome recent memoir, Norman Podhoretz's *Ex-Friends*, pays Heller a handsome compliment. Podhoretz generally reserved the right to be the one to end a connection, dropping Norman Mailer here and Allen Ginsberg there. Heller,

In Fact...

OPEN LETTER TO BOSTON U.

We have learned that John Schulz resigned his administrative post as chairman of the Department of Mass Communication, Advertising and Public Relations after Dean Brent Baker confronted him with evidence that Schulz had quoted from *The Nation* without attribution in a lecture to a class on Perspectives in Communication. Schulz used without credit a phrase that originally appeared in an article by Alexander Stille in our November 29 issue. A student who had read the article later reported the quote's origin to Baker, and Schulz apologized to his class and resigned, though he remains a professor. Since *The Nation* is presumably the injured party in all this, we would like to say that actually we were pleased that Schulz had the good sense to quote us. We urge Dean Baker to restore him to his old position, so long as, in reparation, he distributes to his class free copies of the issue he quoted from, which we will supply. As for the student who finked on him, we compliment her on her good taste in magazines but remind her of our traditional support for the free circulation of ideas (within the bounds of "fair use," of course). And we recommend that any BU professor who assigns an article from *The Nation* be granted lifetime tenure.

POLITICAL GREENLINING

When Bill Bradley and John McCain agreed to a joint campaign appearance to call for a ban on soft money in politics, campaign reform advocates had something to smile about. True, Bradley is a champion collector of checks from Wall Street execs, and McCain has accepted contributions from lobbyists who have business before the Senate Commerce Committee he chairs. But it is encouraging that two major presidential candidates from different parties are assailing at least one form of big-money corruption. Too bad they also symbolize another campaign finance problem: ZIP code favoritism. In a new study, Public Campaign found, not too surprisingly, that a small number of ZIP codes account for much of the campaign cash pocketed by the leading White House contenders—George W. Bush, Al Gore, Bradley and McCain. These include 10021 (the ritzy Upper East Side of New York City), 90210 (everyone knows that one) and 20016 (an area of Washington that is home to many lobbyists). "It is the same neighborhoods that are funding all four front-runners in the race," says Ellen Miller, the executive director of Public Campaign. As the report points out, it is "the wealthy and white that are buying the 2000 presidential election."

FARMERS SUE

Six farmers—five in the US and one in France—filed suit against Monsanto on December 14, claiming that the company defrauded farmers when it said that genetically modified seeds were safe. Activist Jeremy Rifkin, who was the prime mover behind the action, said, "I believe we are at the cusp of a global populist political movement."

NASSER AHMED—FREE AT LAST

On the evening of November 30, Nasser Ahmed, an Egyptian detained for more than three and a half years on the basis of secret evidence, walked out of Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City, a free man. Hours earlier, the Attorney General had declined to intervene to keep him in jail, and the INS, which for years had proclaimed Ahmed a "national security threat," dropped its efforts to detain him. Ahmed's release comes on the heels of that of Hany Kiareldeen, a Palestinian held for nineteen months on the basis of secret evidence. Neither man was ever charged with a violent crime. Ahmed spent more than three years in solitary confinement. The only formal charge against him was that he had overstayed his visa. Showing how absurd the policy is, the government argued in a secret proceeding that his detention made him an important figure in the Arab-American community and that his stature would increase if he were released. Neither the Attorney General nor the INS has shown any sign of abandoning secret evidence, which is now being used to hold some twenty immigrants, all Arabs or Muslims.

PASSINGS

There have been several losses in *The Nation*'s extended family. Faith Sale was not known to us only as the wife of Kirkpatrick Sale but as a friend, colleague and editor. As an editor at Putnam's she exemplified the dwindling but hardy band of workers in publishing who revere literature. She was also a notable activist, working on her own and through the American PEN Center on behalf of writers suppressed, censored, imprisoned, here and abroad—out of the same concern she lavished on her own authors and which made her such a good editor. • The late Jack D. Foner had his career destroyed in a premonitory version of McCarthyism, the 1941 witch hunt at City College of New York, which cost him his job. Undaunted, he became a popular lecturer. Returning to academe in 1969, he founded at Colby College the first black studies program in New England. • The story of Rose Bird, former Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, shows the impact of a species of latter-day McCarthyism. Because of her opposition to the death penalty, she became a target for pro-death groups, which planted false stories about her on Election Day, causing voters to turn her out. Although she might have taught or joined a big law firm, she worked for a poverty law project, according to Betty Medsger, subsisting solely on her state pension, her decency intact long after those who brought her down had lost theirs.

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however, as Podhoretz ruefully records, got in first by dropping him. Good work. After Clinton went husky at Nixon's funeral in 1996, Heller decided he had heard enough, and had no further use for him. Snap judgments are so often the best.

Amazingly handsome and sexy (and greedy) right up to the end, Joe probably benefited from the enlivening thought that he could so easily have been dead. He might well have snuffed it during the Italian campaign that taught him military logic; he was dead lucky (as he might have phrased it) to pull through his hellish encounter with Guillain-Barré syndrome. He was luckier still to meet Valerie as a consequence of surviving that second dress rehearsal for the ineluctable. His *Catch* by any other name would have been as resonant, and, not that he cared for theories of immortality, his reservation in the Pantheon of the ironic was always confirmed. CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Nelson Algren's 1961 review of Catch-22 *is at www.thenation.com.*

Rubin Carter: The Movie

While I sat in the theater watching the movie *The Hurricane*, I felt I was observing a cinematic crime. Along with Myron Beldock and Leon Friedman, I had spent years fighting to free Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, the middleweight boxing contender, and his co-defendant, John Artis, after their conviction for a 1966 triple murder in Paterson, New Jersey.

The movie makes no bones about Rubin's and John's innocence. Denzel Washington is splendid in his portrayal of Rubin's uncompromising resistance to the degradation of prison life, his indefatigable ability to publicize his cause and become a major force in his own defense. Beyond that, however, *The Hurricane* buries the truth in a false Hollywood concoction that blames Rubin's wrongful conviction on one rogue cop who is eventually undone by a group of outside heroes.

In reality, Rubin and John were framed by a corrupt police force assisted by unethical prosecutors, who used racial prejudice to prevent their case from unraveling. What unfolds on the screen does not even attempt to reveal the contours of how the police authorities manufactured their case and how the state court trial judge gave the prosecutor free rein to pander to the bias of the jury. The judge did this by allowing the prosecutor to accuse Rubin and John of committing the murders to avenge a prior killing, in Paterson, of a black man by a white man, even though there was no evidence, beyond Rubin and John's race, to support this theory. By omitting the racist underpinning of the prosecution's case, Hollywood's movie-makers saved white audiences from having to confront their own racial feelings and from understanding how prejudice can overcome reason.

Instead, the film relates the heartwarming story of how a group of white Canadians who lived in Toronto and were raising an African-American boy from Brooklyn learned of Rubin's plight from his book, *The Sixteenth Round*, and came to his rescue. As the film tells it, the Canadians took over the case and uncovered virtually all the evidence that helped to free Rubin. The Canadians and the African-American boy did play an important role in giving Carter psychological support during the darkest hours of his twenty-year imprisonment. But the movie's account of how the Canadians built Carter's legal case simply did not occur. For example, the film shows them finding, in a former county investigator's garbage, a file that exposed how the police concocted a false getaway-car identification. The Canadians had nothing to do with obtaining this file. The county investigator himself admitted he had it, and it was produced only after years of struggling against the prosecutor's determination to block us from obtaining it. In fact, none of the Canadians' investigative efforts played a role in the final outcome.

Is this the hyperbole of an intensely involved lawyer? Not really. My view is largely supported by Federal District Court Judge H. Lee Sarokin's 1985 ruling on the habeas corpus petition the defense team brought after fruitless appeals through every level of the New Jersey court system. Judge Sarokin acknowledged, based on the evidence the defense team presented, that the prosecutor's "racial revenge" theory had tainted the entire trial with racial prejudice. Long before the Canadians even knew Rubin existed, I fought the prosecutor's racial revenge theory at the trial so forcefully that I was held in contempt of court. In addition, Judge Sarokin focused on the evidence that the defense legal team developed after the trial, which established that the prosecution had unconscionably misused a lie detector test.

The film's insistence that there was just one main "bad guy"—rogue detective Vincent DeSimone—(referred to by a different name in the film) has the effect of exaggerating his misdeeds and minimizing those of everyone else involved in the prosecution of Rubin and John. Moreover, DeSimone had *not* been engaged in a vendetta against Rubin since he was 11 years old, nor did he threaten the Canadians while they "investigated" the case, nor did he tamper with their car, almost causing their death.

Does any of this matter? After all, isn't this just Hollywood? I think it does. The horror of the Rubin Carter/John Artis case is that so many participants in the legal system created and then helped to maintain the fiction of the defendants' guilt for so long after it should have been obvious that a great wrong was being perpetrated. Rubin and John were kept in prison by a judiciary that not only turned its back on obvious injustice but gave its stamp of approval

(Continued on Page 24)

CALVIN TRILLIN

On the Latest Republican Debate

I watched these presidential hopefuls join
Together for debating in Des Moines,
And many times I heard allegiance sworn
To Jesus and to babies not quite born.
At times, this thought occurred to me: I hope
They don't think what they're running for is Pope.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Short History of the Twentieth Century

In August 1900, troops of the Western powers broke the Boxer siege of the embassies in Peking,* looted the Empress Dowager's summer palace and thus destroyed for a time the valiant nationalist effort to halt colonial exploitation of China. And now, here we are at the other end of the century, listening to leading lights of progressive American politics from Nader's fair-trade campaign, the AFL-CIO and assorted NGOs, plus leading lights of right-wing American politics, all calling for China to be denied admission to the WTO. What happened in between?

Oh, it's an old story now. China had a revolution, a series of revolutions in fact. Other poor countries did too. They tried to redistribute land and wealth, build an industrial base, foster internal demand, get a fair price for the commodities they needed to sell abroad. The Western powers didn't care for that, any more than they liked the Boxers. They mustered armies to crush these revolutions, hired mercenaries, saboteurs and spies. They never relented, never forgave. Some revolutions struggled on for several decades, in varying states of siege, boycotts, embargoes, economic sabotage. One—Cuba—survives. Whole continents drowned in blood.

As the world nears its rendezvous with the third Christian millennium, a refined system of exploitation has been put into almost universally successful execution. The poor countries are held in helotry just as they were in the colonial world of the nineteenth century, their assigned task still the provision of raw materials or cheap goods manufactured under imperial license. There's nothing new about "globalization," just elaboration of the process. To insure that these poor countries continue to depend on exports for survival, the Western powers have made sure that the possibility of robust internal markets is thwarted. Austerity programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have laid waste the domestic sectors of these economies, creating small elites servile to the imperial powers, amid vast oceans of poverty and desperation.

So awful have been the cycles of repression and rapine that some countries are in advanced stages of physical disintegration. The devastation of Hurricane Mitch in Central America can be laid in large part to the crushing of all bids for land reform thirty and forty years earlier, with the CIA acting as overall impresario. Peasants have been forced off good land onto marginal terrain, which they necessarily overexploit, thus rendering it vulnerable to flooding and consequent landslides and erosion.

So should we not regard with at least mixed emotions the launching of a campaign by liberals to deny China entry to the WTO? Should we not reflect at least for a moment on the fact that the talks in Seattle broke down in part because African and Caribbean nations regarded proposals for labor and environmental standards as no more than a protectionist ruse by the Western powers? "China, we're coming atcha," yells Mike Dolan, the Nader group's organizer in Seattle, as he discusses the next item of business. "There's no question about it. The next item of business is China." Jeff Faux, director of the AFL-CIO–backed Economic Policy Institute, tells reporters that with China in the WTO it will be impossible to get labor and environmental standards installed, because China's too big—presumably for the type of coercion that could be brought to bear on, say, Indonesia. "The China vote is going to become proxy for all our concerns about globalization," says Denise Mitchell of the AFL-CIO.

So who exactly is the enemy here? China? The WTO? Or capitalism? After all, the WTO has been merely an expression of what capitalist chieftains of the Western world want to lock in. The corporations could probably accept in some form those famous labor and environmental standards. It doesn't take much by way of a pledge or a few more cents a month or an itinerant bunch of inspectors to bring most of the NGO watchdogs to heel.

Do I feel comfortable at the sight of Western progressives execrating China? No, even though I know there are Chinese elites oppressing Chinese masses, inflicting dreadful working conditions and pay scales. The progressive intellectuals from the Economic Policy Institute who denounce China's "state-controlled economic system" as "market distorting" (thus Robert Scott in *Working USA*) aren't so far removed from those who have administered the siege of Cuba all these years. Many liberal NGO types are interventionist by disposition. The Somalia debacle, and to some extent the Kosovo nightmare, were their shows.

There's no win-win situation for workers of the world, in the current era at least. American steelworkers here do better, ergo Russian and South Korean steelworkers overseas do worse. A garment worker here loses a job, a Central American makes a dime. Capitalism dictates the choices. So what can we do here? I don't think we should be trying to fix up the WTO or keep China out. That's not the sort of currency radicals should have truck with. Our currency is solidarity. We should be making war on the IMF and World Bank, helping poor countries fight to develop internal markets, hence better-paid workers and stronger agriculture.

We have plenty to denounce right here. The Jubilee 2000 campaign against World Bank bonds is a great thing. The campaign against the bank was terrific, at least until bank president James Wolfensohn was smart enough to co-opt some of the relevant NGOs by hiring many of their technocrats. The United States has more than 3,600 on death row, 2 million in prison, in hundreds of hellish dungeons like California's Pelican Bay. We're the world's leading arms peddler, the world's leading polluter. We don't need, on the edge of 2000, at the end of this imperial century, to be signing on to a Yellow Peril campaign. ■

* My grandfather Henry, a diplomat, was in the British Legation in Peking in those years. Peter Fleming writes in his *Siege at Peking*: "The well-stocked library of Mr. Cockburn, the First Secretary, provided some with solace. It included several reference books dealing with the Indian Mutiny, and accounts of the relief of Lucknow were in keen demand; the fate of Cawnpore was less closely studied."

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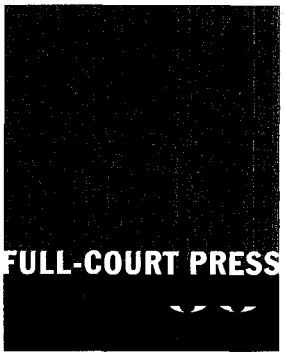
ERIC ALTERMAN

The Prattle on Seattle

The ideological rigidity that governs punditocracy trade debate transcends right/left dichotomies. Yes, the increasingly marginalized reactionary crank Pat Buchanan is accidentally on the democratic side in this fracas. Far more significant in this case are the liberals, like Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, and centrists, like Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek* and *Foreign Affairs*, who are so deeply committed to the ideological preconceptions of "free trade" that they fairly ooze contempt for the other side. In writing about Seattle, this group makes one long for the modesty and good manners of, say, George Will or Henry Kissinger.



Reading Friedman, *Times* readers might be forgiven for wondering if the columnist had become possessed by the spirit of Joe McCarthy: "These anti-W.T.O. protesters...are a Noah's ark of flat-earth advocates, protectionist trade unions and yuppies looking for their 1960s fix," he wailed. "If the protesters in Seattle stopped yapping, they would realize that they have been duped by knaves like Pat Buchanan." Not for a nanosecond does Friedman entertain the possibility that the protesters—and the intellectuals, activists, politicians and citizens who support them—may be operating from an eminently sensible set of principles and priorities. Nor can he countenance the belief that democracy itself is of intrinsic value when making decisions that affect workers and communities across the globe.

"The biggest negative fallout from Seattle," he writes in a second, slightly apologetic column, "is the way it smeared free trade. I fear that politicians all over America will look at Seattle and say, 'Wow, if that's what you get when you support free trade, I'm hiding.'" Just what has Friedman so worried—given the corporate stranglehold on our political system—is hard to fathom. But would that it were true. What if Americans started to question some of the homilies they are traditionally handed by the intellectual class? What if they determined that the idyllic notion of "free trade" is really no such thing, but merely a utopian smokescreen masking a series of institutional arrangements that allow corporations to move capital without concern for communities, workers or local ecological systems?

What if they discovered, say from Harvard economist Frank Taussig, that in the United States "manufactures in general grew and flourished" during the forty-five years prior to the Civil War, when US tariffs were near their historical height but began a precipitate decline during a period of unilateral free trade in the 1960s? (The same was true in Great Britain.) And what if they learned of Taussig's Harvard colleague Dani Rodrik, whose research demonstrates that "no widely accepted model attributes to postwar trade liberalization more than a very tiny fraction of the increased prosperity of the advanced industrial countries"? Would America crumble to dust?

Well, so long as the mandarins of the punditocracy control debate, this day will never come to pass. Here is Zakaria venting in *Newsweek*: "What happened in Seattle was an unmitigated disaster.... Political support for free trade might have been damaged, which is bad for workers everywhere.... Beyond all that, the spectacle was simply embarrassing." Yes, democratic demonstrations can sometimes be embarrassing. We're sorry. Zakaria continues: "The purpose of trade agreements is to reduce trade barriers and thus expand economic growth. Period." End of discussion. If these same agreements lead to despoiled communities and lower standards of living and safety, well, tough luck. Write a letter to your Congressman. Ask him to please ignore his corporate contributors next time he votes on a trade issue and listen instead to the little guy with a part-time job and no health insurance. If that doesn't work, well, life is tough all over, fella. Just look at the crap those poor trade ministers had to put up with in Seattle.

By contrast, the straightforward coverage—at least in print—of the Battle in Seattle was pretty good. Most reporters made a conscientious effort to separate the tens of thousands of peaceful protesters from the few who smashed windows. (It is a bit late in the game, I fear, to ask television newscasts to avoid focusing on violent confrontation in order to spend more time on substantive economic and political debate.) Many print reporters did considerable justice to the protesters' arguments. Michael Elliott did a fine job opposite Zakaria in *Newsweek*. So did the *Washington Post*'s Steven Pearlstein, who noted in a front-page news analysis that Seattle transformed the trade debate into a debate about "the food people eat, the air they breathe, the quality of medical care, and the social and cultural milieu in which they live."

This may be too optimistic by half. The singular political problem in America is the ability of the corporate class, through its campaign contributions, lobbyists and media apologists, to manipulate the system on a daily basis. Protesters, however, have to settle for hoping that politicians will "hear their message." Well, Bill Clinton made a fine speech in Seattle, but the checks are going to come from the same people tomorrow as they did yesterday. Yes, a "Sweeney-Greenie" alliance—in Todd Gitlin's felicitous phrase—was thrilling to view in conception, but it will be exceedingly difficult to maintain now that the protesters and the journalists have gone home. Lobbyists never go home.

Today the ideologues of the punditocracy are no less dedicated to the charade of "free trade" than their counterparts were to the war they insisted we were winning back in 1968. That year, most of the country had had more than enough of that senseless war, but the system—responding to its own undemocratic imperatives—came up with three presidential candidates who equated the desire for peace with procommunist treason. Now all four serious presidential candidates support the WTO and the disastrous prospect of China's admission to it. Meanwhile, reflecting on the goals of Seattle's protesters, Friedman complains of "a country that tried that. It guaranteed everyone's job, maintained a protected market and told everyone else how to live. It was called the Soviet Union." Sound familiar? ■

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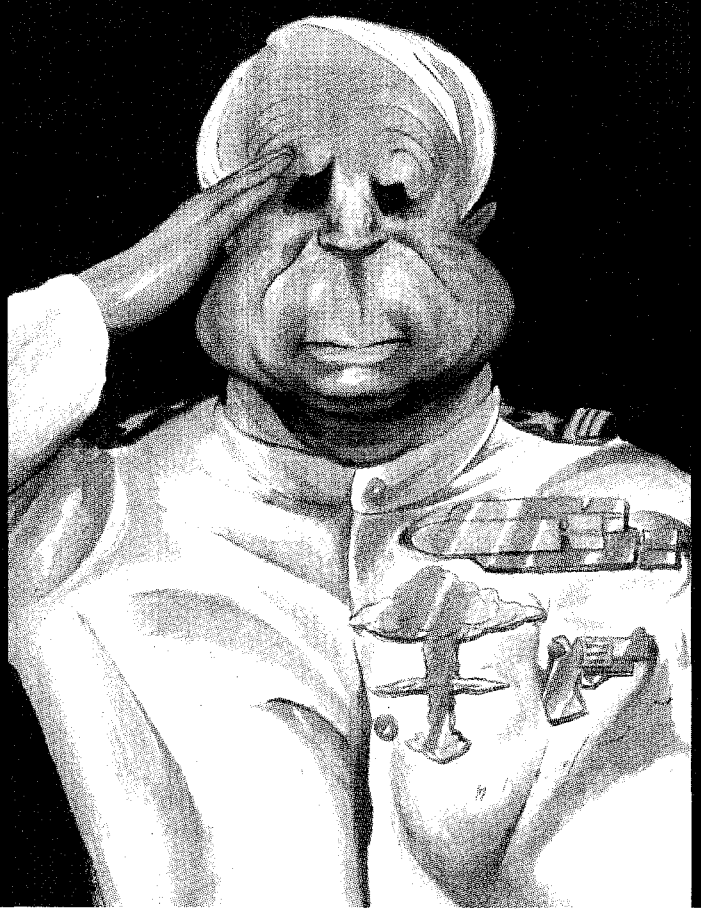

McCAIN'S VIETNAM

by ROBERT DREYFUSS

ELECTION 2000

Humming along under a gray New Hampshire sky aboard the Straight Talk Express, his campaign bus, hero-for-President Senator John McCain says, "The shadow of Vietnam doesn't hang over everything I do."

But he's wrong—it does. Indeed, it defines the man. For decades, McCain has brandished his years as a wounded, roped and beaten American prisoner of war in North Vietnam to build his reputation. He's used it to boost his political career, first as a member of the House of Representatives, then as a senator, now as a presidential candidate who has emerged from the Republican pack as Texas Governor George W. Bush's chief competitor. The story of McCain the POW mesmerizes many voters and has charmed the media, who've been attracted by McCain's accessibility and blunt-spoken manner. In a political season when "character" rather than issues seems to be the determining factor for many voters, McCain is counting on his Vietnam experience to trump Bush and, if it comes to that, Vice President Al Gore or former Senator Bill Bradley.

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Indeed, for some Americans, his endurance under wartime prison conditions—described in excruciating detail in his best-selling autobiography, *Faith of My Fathers*—is all that needs to be said about McCain. Measured against the lightweight, almost juvenile Texas Governor, he appears mature and reliable. "McCain's a man!" says Caroline Wojcicki, 50, of Amherst, New Hampshire, who's come out to cheer on the Arizonan at a candidates' debate in Manchester. "George Bush is still a boy—maybe a good boy, but still a boy." In that, she echoes the sentiments of many New Hampshire Republicans and independents, who've elevated McCain to clear front-runner in polls taken in the Granite State.

But there is a dark side to McCain's posture as a hero. Though he suffered as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, he seems blind to the suffering inflicted on that nation by America's brutal and misguided war. Trained as a naval officer, grandson of a senior World War II admiral and son of another admiral who, McCain says, "had command over the war in Vietnam" as commander in chief, Pacific command, McCain is too willing to call on American military power to enforce US interests overseas. Angry in temperament and pugnacious in style, McCain exhibits a swaggering readiness to avenge America's defeat in Vietnam. Like the man he succeeded as senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater—whose militaristic style alarmed voters when he ran for President in 1964—there is only one word to describe the prospect of John McCain with his finger on the button: scary.

John McCain seems blind to the suffering inflicted on Vietnam by America's brutal and misguided war.

For McCain, strategic thinking starts and ends with Vietnam, and with the Americans who fought and died there. "The memory of them, of what they bore for honor and country, causes me to look in every prospective conflict for the shadow of Vietnam," McCain said in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August. Yet in looking for that shadow, McCain draws all the wrong conclusions.

Rather than accepting America's defeat in Vietnam as a humbling one and a fitting end to an arrogant and vainglorious exercise of military power, McCain considers the war in Vietnam to have been a "noble cause," whose loss might have been avoided but for the timidity of America's political leaders. Like many Vietnam-era military men, McCain believes that the war could have been won had America sent ground forces into North Vietnam and launched a strategic bombing campaign using B-52s. "That," says Daniel Ellsberg, the Vietnam-era Defense Department official who leaked the so-called Pentagon Papers, "is an incredibly discredited point of view." McCain appears unworried by concern that such actions would have led to enormous US casualties and perhaps caused either China or the Soviet Union to enter the war.

McCain's gung-ho attitude toward the Vietnam conflict has its roots in the months he spent in Vietnam's skies. In *Faith of My Fathers* he describes how, looking down at Soviet ships unloading arms in Vietnamese ports and at the construction of surface-to-air-missile sites, he chafed at the "frustratingly limited bombing targets" that restricted air raids to military installations, roads, bridges and power plants, calling such constraints "senseless" and "illogical." "We thought our civilian commanders were complete idiots," he wrote.

McCain expanded on this theme in a speech to the American Bar Association on the thirtieth anniversary of the 1968 Tet Offensive by North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. "Like a lot of Vietnam veterans, I believed and still believe that the war was winnable," he said. "I do not believe that it was winnable at an acceptable cost in the short or probably even the long term using the strategy of attrition which we employed there to such tragic results. I do believe that had we taken the war to the North and made full, consistent use of air power in the North, we ultimately would have prevailed."

Appearing before a packed audience at a town-hall meeting at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire in early December, McCain resoundingly called on his listeners to recall "the lessons of Vietnam," which—rolled up into an applause-gathering soundbite—means, he said, "never again do we send our men and women to fight and die in foreign conflicts unless our goal is victory!" Practically speaking, McCain considers the lessons of Vietnam to be as follows: America's armed forces should be utilized when "US vital interests are threatened," which interests McCain liberally defines as including "ensuring the survival and prosperity of the American people, defending our allies and combating such global threats as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or narcotics." Though McCain consistently opposes the use of US forces in nonstrategic or humanitarian missions like Somalia and Haiti, when US interests are at stake, he believes, Washington must make a full-scale commitment to win, even if it means total war—an approach that he applies to crises around the world.

At the height of the crisis in Kosovo, McCain clamored for an invasion, bitterly criticizing the Clinton Administration for its "excessively restricted air campaign" and its decision to "refrain from using ground troops," adding: "These two mistakes were made in what almost seemed willful ignorance of every lesson we learned in Vietnam." Similarly, during the flare-up in 1994 over North Korea's nuclear program, McCain recklessly accused President Clinton of "appeasement" of Pyongyang, warning, "The time for more forceful, coercive action is long overdue." McCain demanded that the United States increase its alert status; mobilize US troops; deploy aircraft carriers, more fighters and Apache helicopters; pre-position bombers and tankers; and announce the immediate application of economic sanctions—even while recognizing the strong possibility that such actions could lead to war on the Korean peninsula. And on Iraq, he says that "the only way to prevail is to strike disproportionate to the provocation," criticizing the White House for "the extremely limited scale" of bombing raids there.

In a speech in New York on the anniversary of the December 7 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, McCain singled out maverick nations like North Korea and Iraq for special attention under a

Robert Dreyfuss is an independent journalist and regular Nation *contributor. Research assistance was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.*

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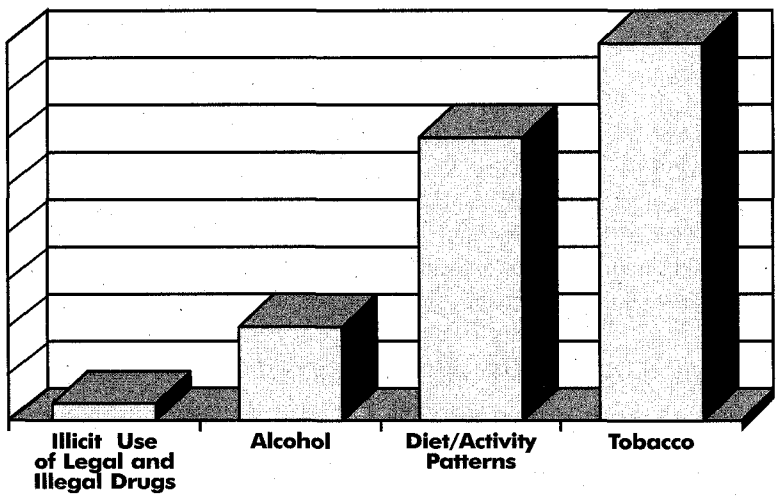
Let's Keep America's Drug Problem in Perspective

Estimated Causes of Preventable Deaths*



- 5 times as many people die from Alcohol each year than from illicit drugs and misuse of legal pharmaceuticals
- 15 times as many people die from poor diets and activity patterns
- 20 times as many people die from tobacco

Why arrest 1.6 million people each year for drugs?

Does jailing drug users make more sense than jailing over weight people and smokers?

* Estimated deaths attributed to: Illicit Use of Legal and Illegal Drugs - 20,000; Alcohol - 100,000; Diet/Activity Patterns - 300,000; Tobacco - 400,000.

Source: *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Statistics Source Book 1998 citing 1990 figures.* (Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services). Pg. 218

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-9050, info@csdp.org, http://www.csdp.org/.

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policy he calls "rogue-state rollback." If pressure against these states doesn't work, he said, "We must be prepared to back up these measures with American military force if the existence of such rogue states threatens America's interests and values."

"It seems to me that he finds it uncomfortably normal that we should be blowing somebody up," says John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists. "I think McCain has not been able to come home from the war."

If today McCain is obtuse about Vietnam, a telling incident from the summer of 1967 indicates that for a fleeting moment, at least, he came face to face with his conscience over Vietnam—and blinked.

Like many potentially life-altering experiences, McCain's came as the result of a brush with death. On July 29, 1967, while preparing for his sixth bombing run over North Vietnam in his A-4 Skyhawk aboard the deck of the USS Forrestal, an accidentally fired Zuni missile ripped into his plane's fuel tank. Within moments, a chain reaction swept the deck of the carrier, triggering fires and explosions, setting off 1,000-pound bombs and engulfing planes, killing 134 men. McCain, slightly wounded, saw body parts fly and watched blistered comrades die before his eyes.

A few months later, sipping Scotch in a Saigon villa with Johnny Apple of the *New York Times*, McCain reflected on the trauma. "It's a difficult thing to say," he said, "but now that I've seen what the bombs and the napalm did to the people on our ship, I'm not so sure that I want to drop any more of that stuff on North Vietnam." (In 1972, a significant number of B-52 pilots and crew engaged in exactly that kind of heroic insubordination, refusing orders to fly missions in the midst of President Nixon's carpet-bombing of North Vietnam.)

Certainly McCain could not have been unaware of the havoc unleashed by his bombing missions over Vietnam. Though Pentagon war planners and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara preferred to emphasize the antiseptic nature of aerial bombardment against carefully chosen targets, a highly publicized series of articles in late 1966 by Harrison Salisbury in the *New York Times* described the widespread devastation of civilian neighborhoods around Hanoi by American bombs. "Bomb damage… extends over an area of probably a mile or so on both sides of the highway" near one target, he wrote, noting that "small villages and hamlets along the route [were] almost obliterated." Several years ago, a chastened McNamara acknowledged that Operation Rolling Thunder, which unloaded 800 tons of bombs a day over North Vietnam, caused more than a million deaths and injuries in Vietnam each year from 1965 to 1968.

Standing stiffly in the sun outside a New Hampshire high school after a campaign appearance, McCain curtly rejects the idea that he had any second thoughts about his role in Rolling Thunder. He denies the accuracy of the quotation from 1967, stumbling briefly over his words before barking, "That wasn't the exact statement." Instead, he says, he was simply referring to the "terrible power we had" and reacting to the horror of war. And perhaps it is too much to expect McCain, born on a naval air station in the Panama Canal Zone and programmed virtually since birth for his part in the war, to have let his conscience get the better of him. In any case, within weeks of the '67 incident, McCain made the fateful decision to plunge back into combat, getting himself assigned to the carrier Oriskany, where he joined an A-4 squadron called "the Saints." On October 26, 1967, on his twenty-third bombing mission, this one against a thermal power plant in what McCain described in his book as "a heavily populated part of Hanoi," he was shot down, plunging into a lake just blocks away from Ho Chi Minh's presidential palace, and taken to prison.

"Nobody made me fly over Vietnam," McCain says now, as quoted in *John McCain: An American Odyssey*, the biography by Robert Timberg. "That's what I was trained to do and that's what I wanted to do."

Outside the GOP candidates' debate in Manchester, a contingent of McCain-supporting Vietnam veterans taunts a group of Bush backers with the chant: "How much coke did George do?" The Bush people respond with a question of their own: "Why is the media supporting McCain? Is he a liberal?"

He's not, of course. But the media's love affair with McCain makes it a question worth asking. Aboard the Straight Talk Express, where McCain, his staff and a gaggle of reporters are packed in cheek by jowl, there is an eerie and unsettling camaraderie. Mixed in amid laughter, banter and jokes about football and the upcoming Army-Navy game are a string of easy political questions. (Q: Do you enjoy campaigning? A: "I love it. This is what I really enjoy.") Reporters are enthralled by McCain, and it shows in the friendly, even gushing, coverage he gets. Even a grizzled veteran like CBS's Mike Wallace—who said, half seriously, that he was considering quitting his job to work for McCain—has fallen in love, while liberal pundit David Nyhan of the *Boston Globe* praises McCain so effusively that copies of his recent columns (calling McCain "brave," "gutsy" and "a straight-shooting, high-flying, damn-the-torpedoes military hero") litter literature tables in McCain's New Hampshire campaign headquarters. A profile in *Esquire* is called "John McCain Walks on Water." Ted Koppel, host of ABC's *Nightline*, wondered aloud whether McCain "is just so popular with us in the media that we are artificially breathing life into his campaign."

McCain's status as a tortured POW, which gives him cachet with voters, seems to have caused the media to deal gingerly with him.

One certain factor in the media's adulation is that McCain's status as a tortured POW, which gives him a certain cachet with voters, also seems to have caused the media to deal gingerly with him. "It's as if the POW issue is something isolated from the war," says Howard Zinn, the historian and author of *A People's History of the United States*. "To me, that's just part of the general inclination of the culture, and the media, not to bring up the war. Whenever the issue of POWs comes up, they are seen as victims, and never as victimizers."

Perhaps the most striking example of the media's unwillingness to challenge McCain's air of moral authority is when he shocks listeners by casually calling the Vietnamese "gooks." The racist and disparaging term, popularized by GIs during the war, occurs repeatedly in a 1973 *U.S. News & World Report* account penned by McCain after his release from prison. "The 'gooks' were

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bombarding us with antiwar quotes from people in high places back in Washington," he wrote, referring to the propaganda that his captors gave him. A quarter of a century later, while speaking with reporters aboard the Straight Talk Express in October, McCain was still calling Vietnamese "gooks"—and according to a reporter who was there, no one called him on it. It's enough to make you wonder whether the reporters were thinking: Well, this guy spent five years in a prison camp, so he can say anything he wants. Roger Simon, writing in *U.S. News*, cited the incident and added: "John McCain says 'gooks,' and who's going to tell him not to?"

Stanley Karnow, author of *Vietnam: A History*, thinks the media ignore Vietnam in part because the war is ancient history for a younger generation of reporters. "The animosities of the war, the days when people were screaming at each other over dinner tables, that's all gone now," he says. "Probably not many people under the age of 50 even remember the war." And, for reporters over 50 who opposed the war, perhaps McCain's candidacy allows them to expunge a bit of lingering guilt over the way Vietnam veterans were excoriated.

When Vietnam does come up in profiles of McCain, reporters usually focus on the role that he played, along with Senator John Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat and fellow Vietnam veteran, in vigorously supporting US recognition of Vietnam in 1994 and in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two former enemies. In his campaign appearances, McCain frequently reminds his audience about that, telling perhaps 2,000 people packed into a New Hampshire high school in early December that he believes in "reconciliation and healing" in regard to Vietnam and pointing proudly to the fact that thousands of US veterans have gone back to Vietnam since 1994, often taking their families, to seek closure. David Halberstam, one of the Vietnam era's leading journalists and the Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *The Best and the Brightest*, has been convinced. "I think he's wonderful," says Halberstam. "On an issue that has been grievously divisive, I think he has been better than anyone at creating a healing process."

Reporters also praise McCain for his plain-spoken openness. Unlike Bush, for instance, who is jealously protected from unsanitary encounters with the press by his campaign, McCain is constantly surrounded by reporters and never speaks "off the record." His penchant for off-color humor, rather than tarnishing him, appears to put reporters in awe of his candor. Even cruel jokes, such as the one that McCain told about Chelsea Clinton being ugly because Janet Reno is her father, slide off McCain's back. And the media have another interest as well: Were his candidacy to unravel, the race for the GOP nomination would be all but over, making the campaign much less interesting to report on. Above all, McCain is a good story.

In countless upbeat profiles, a great deal of attention is spent examining the areas in which McCain parts company with Republican orthodoxy, such as campaign finance reform and tobacco. Ask him about a variety of issues—healthcare, telecommunications, taxes—and McCain fires back with a comment on the "evil and pernicious influence" of wealthy campaign donors. "I'm determined to give government back to you by ridding the government of the big money from special interests," McCain tells a packed town meeting in New Hampshire, and his passion seems genuine.

His stand has earned him the ire of senior Republicans like Senate majority leader Trent Lott and Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell, a staunch opponent of campaign finance reform. (In a lighthearted interview on the bus with Comedy Central, McCain can't resist getting in a dig at McConnell. Asked to name the funniest politician, McCain deadpans: "Probably Senator Mitch McConnell. He makes me laugh all the time." The reporters on the bus howl.)

Yet McCain stands far to the right on many issues. He supports the Star Wars missile defense boondoggle and never tires of accusing President Clinton of underfunding the Pentagon, while surrounding himself with hawkish foreign policy gurus, including Henry Kissinger, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger. He supports school vouchers, privatization of Social Security and a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced federal budget. He backs the flat tax, the death penalty and a lock-'em-up approach to crime. He opposes gun control, abortion and increasing the minimum wage. He opposes government regulation as a matter of principle. He voted to impeach President Clinton, and he supported every item in Newt Gingrich's 1994 Contract With America. He's voted for an amendment to outlaw flag-burning. He backs tort reform and free trade, including NAFTA and normalizing trade relations with China. He voted against protecting homosexuals from job discrimination, and (though he's changed his mind since) he voted against making Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a holiday.

In the end, it's hard to see how McCain can win the GOP nomination. Without a doubt, he has a good chance of winning New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary on February 1. According to Rick Davis, McCain's campaign manager, his strategy there is to combine old-fashioned retail politics—he's organized more than sixty town meetings and plans many more—with an effort to target the state's 100,000-plus veterans and the 300,000-plus independent voters, who can choose to vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary. In 1996, says Davis, turnout in the Republican primary was 180,000.

Still, should McCain win New Hampshire, he'll then face Bush in an escalating race in big, expensive states where Bush's gigantic fundraising advantage and high name recognition, not to mention the support of most of the Republican Party establishment, will severely test McCain's ability to compete.

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Nevertheless, McCain's emergence as a serious contender is a sign that he represents something that a significant part of America is searching for in 2000. Is it that Americans want a hero? A tough guy? A straight shooter? Is it that McCain's prison experience imbues him with "character"? As the Straight Talk Express sways, McCain muses on the topic. "We don't know exactly what the American people are looking for," he says. "In '76 they were looking for someone who wasn't Nixon. In '80 they were looking for a strong leader. In '88 they wanted someone to continue with the Reagan legacy. This year, I think they just want someone who tells it exactly as he sees it."

But in the end, is it enough to be plain-spoken if one is also so wrong? "The fact that he says what he thinks is in his favor," says Ellsberg. "But what he thinks is cockeyed." ■

WORKERS CENTERS ARE ONE PATH TO LABOR ORGANIZING AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

Immigrants Fight the Power

JENNIFER GORDON

It was an unusual victory. In 1997 New York State passed the toughest wage-enforcement law in the country—after an eighteen-month campaign developed and passionately led by immigrant workers, almost none of whom could vote. At a time when anti-immigrant hysteria was at its peak, these newcomers won the sponsorship of their bill by the same Republican state senators who had tried to bring their own version of California's Proposition 187 to New York. And the workers did it through legislative visits carried out in Spanish.

PETER ZIERLEIN

The participants were members of the Workplace Project, a workers center on Long Island. Its strategy of citizenship education and organizing shines light on one road to real political participation by immigrants. The project, which I founded in 1992 and directed until 1998, is but one of more than a dozen independent workers centers around the country. The Chinese Staff and Workers Association in New York, La Mujer Obrera in Texas and the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates in California were among the pioneers. Six centers now exist in New York State alone.

The Workplace Project and its fellow centers are far from having all the answers to the difficult questions of how best to organize immigrant workers. But what the project learned through the work that culminated in the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act should be of interest to the labor and immigrant-rights movements in any case. With more than 25 percent of new entrants to the work force foreign-born, labor organizing must address immigrant issues if it is to succeed.

This story begins in what at first glance seems an unlikely place: the well-planned streets and bedroom communities of Long Island.

Suburbs are the new immigrant destination, and the Island is home to perhaps 400,000 Latino immigrants, including one of the largest outposts of Central Americans in the country. On the surface, the suburbs seem an appealing setting, but their economy bears all the hallmarks of sweatshop labor. Busboys and dishwashers may labor more than seventy hours a week in restaurants for less than $3 an hour with no overtime, despite federal minimums; workers mow up to fifty lawns a day for small landscaping companies, slicing off fingers and permanently injuring their backs in the process; and isolated and vulnerable domestic workers receive as little as $1.90 an hour in workweeks of up to eighty-five hours. Even such minimal wages may never be paid. Business is transacted in cash, employers close and open under new names and workers are plentiful and cheap.

Despite the recent rededication of the AFL-CIO to the organizing of immigrant workers and a few resulting victories in immigrant-heavy industries (for example, the SEIU's impressive 1999 victory in California's homecare industry), unions are often unwilling to undertake expensive organizing campaigns in small, fly-by-night businesses that do not generate an adequate dues base even when unionization drives win.

Labor unions on Long Island have lagged behind the national AFL. Some see immigrants as a threat to their hold on the job market and have no plans to organize them. Others find themselves representing a Latino work force as jobs turn over, but do not translate their contracts or hire staff who speak Spanish. As a result, most traditional organizing campaigns targeting Long Island immigrants have failed.

The Workplace Project began where unions dropped away. Its mission is to insure fair wages and working conditions for all low-wage workers through a cycle of outreach, leadership training, membership-building and organizing in individual workplaces, industrywide and across industries. The project's more than 465 dues-paying members are gardeners and domestic workers, busboys and janitors, and workers in small plants. A slim majority are from El Salvador, with the rest from other countries in Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. About a third are undocumented; most of the rest have temporary work permits.

The project's Workers Course is the training ground for membership. Taught at night in Spanish in nine-week sessions,

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it focuses on labor law, immigration and labor history, and organizing techniques. After graduating, with the support of seven staff people, members design and run the center's organizing campaigns and oversee the organization itself through a series of workers committees, membership meetings and an all-immigrant board of directors elected from among the membership.

The campaign for the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act began with the single most common problem workers bring to the project's Workers Clinic: nonpayment of wages. Jorge Bonilla, a restaurant worker who came to the clinic in 1997, earned $250 in two and a half months of twelve-hour work days—35 cents an hour. Unable to pay his rent, he was evicted from his apartment and forced to live on the restaurant's floor. Yanira Juarez reported in 1995 that she had worked for six months as a domestic worker without pay. Her employer told her to think of her wages as being "in a savings account" that she would receive when she left.

This was not surprising. On Long Island the state Department of Labor had one inspector for approximately 7,000 private workplaces. The project's Legal Clinic database of more than 900 cases showed that only two of the seventy-two cases that the project had filed with the DOL over three years, or just 3 percent, resulted in even partial payment to workers. By contrast, over the same period the project, with only one person working half-time on three cases at any point, represented 234 wage cases directly and resolved 71 percent of them, winning $215,000 for 166 workers.

Through the Workplace Project, members build the skills and experience they need for careers of activism.

With the support of fellow workers at the Chinese Staff and Workers Association and the Latino Workers Center, Workplace Project members decided to undertake a campaign to change New York State labor law. What did they want? First on the list: an increase in the fine on employers for repeat or willful nonpayment from 25 percent to 200 percent of the back wages owed, to make the law self-enforcing. They also proposed making the crime of nonpayment a felony rather than a misdemeanor. In addition, the DOL would be required to go back six years in investigations rather than two and would be prohibited from settling cases for less than the full amount owed without the worker's permission.

In the Democratic-controlled State Assembly, the active support of the chairwoman of the Labor Committee, Catherine Nolan, virtually guaranteed passage in that house. But without strong Republican backing in the Senate, the bill would go nowhere. The Workplace Project set itself the goal of winning the sponsorship of Senator Nicholas Spano, chairman of the Labor Committee, plus five Long Island senators—the majority of the Island's nine-member, all-Republican delegation.

The task was formidable. As the campaign gathered strength in 1996, the immigrant-bashing triumvirate of the federal Anti-Terrorism Act, Personal Responsibility Act and Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act were voted into law, and similar anti-immigrant measures were pending in New York.

With this in mind, a group of fifteen Workplace Project members and staff designed a message to appeal to Republican legislators and industry organizations. The bill, they argued, would prevent unfair competition, keep people off public benefits, increase revenue to the state (by raising penalties against noncompliance and by scaring employers into paying taxes) and be self-funded through money raised from increased penalties.

This message, picked up by the media, embarrassed senators who feared they would appear to be protecting exploitative employers if they did not support the bill. The project also sought and received endorsements from Long Island's most powerful business association, as well as UNITE!, the New York State AFL-CIO, Catholic Charities and nine prominent rabbis, among others. Project members collected hundreds of letters from fellow immigrants and supplemented them with a few from supportive employers and churches. Most important, they visited legislators, without an entourage of lobbyists. Each visit was conducted using simultaneous-translation equipment that both senators and immigrants wore.

These immigrants were not in Albany to tell sob stories. They were not token "clients" brought along to speak on an advocacy visit. Instead, having trained and role-played at the Workplace Project for weeks in advance, immigrants ran the entire meeting, mixing their personal experiences with statistics from the Workplace Project database, appealing to the senators' own interests, answering their questions and responding to their concerns.

That the bill's provisions were developed by immigrant workers rather than being designed by advocates gave the workers a passion for the bill that would have been impossible to achieve otherwise. Workplace Project president Luz Torres reflects, "The thing that made it possible to keep going, even when it never seemed like we would win, was knowing how real the problem was, living it daily.... It's not just that it kept *us* going; hearing about it moved the senators.... They had to look at the problems face-to-face."

By June of 1997, Spano and five of the nine Long Island senators—all of whom had previously voted for every anti-immigrant provision that made it to the Senate floor—had signed on to be sponsors. On July 1 the Senate and Assembly voted unanimously to pass the act. Ten weeks later, after the Workplace Project led a prolonged organizing battle against the New York Farm Bureau, the farmers' organization that staunchly opposed the bill, Governor George Pataki signed it into law.

Why did the campaign win? A few political factors suggest themselves. First, the bill had no impact on the state budget. Although this does not explain the support the bill received, it does highlight a barrier it avoided. On the affirmative side, the campaign attracted a mix of unexpected allies who represented powerful interests, used a creative message and came at a time when Republicans knew they needed to court Latino voters. But perhaps most powerful was the immigrants' insistence that they be taken seriously as workers and as political participants.

Republican sponsoring senators had previously justified their support of Proposition 187–like legislation with descriptions of illegal aliens who come to this country to take from the system. Sponsor Senator John Marchi was quoted in *Newsday* a few years earlier saying, "It is street knowledge around the world that we're

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under a mandate to provide relief.... We've become a magnet, saying, 'Come to New York, and we'll take care of you.'" But it was hard for the senators to separate *these* immigrants, sitting before them with dignity, from their own families' experiences of building a life in the United States. The sons and grandsons of laborers, waiters and delivery-truck drivers, the senators saw their own immigrant heritage as a source of authenticity. Senator Dean Skelos, a key sponsor, remembers the labor and suffering of his Greek grandfather: "I mean, I came from a background of immigrants, and most of us did in this country, and I saw what my grandfather did. My grandfather was a waiter who was involved in unionizing the restaurant workers, way back. You know, I'm told he was even beat up once because of his labor activities."

Once the senators began to identify their own heritage with Workplace Project members' tales of abuse at the hands of unscrupulous employers, they became concerned about fairness, even for undocumented immigrants. Asked whether he saw any inconsistency between his support for legislation that would have denied public schooling and basic healthcare to undocumented immigrants and this legislation once it was cast as an "illegal-worker protection act," Senator Skelos said, "No, because what you have here is people who are trying to be productive and earn a living, and you want to protect people who are looking to be productive and earn a living." (As useful as his distinction between "workers" and "takers" was for this case, it presents an additional challenge for groups of immigrants organizing to protect the rights of children and people in need of public benefits. At this point the Workplace Project doesn't have the capacity to work on issues outside the immigrant labor arena.)

What's interesting about this story is deeper than how the bill was able to pass. Participation in the Workplace Project and the campaign has launched workers on what look to be careers of activism. As project member Juan Calderon said, "I always thought of politics as for politicians and of myself as a worker who...is going to have to work every day to earn my bread. I couldn't change that. But I feel like now I may have a chance to make changes." One participant has started a new community organization on Long Island; three others set up support committees for communities or political campaigns in their home countries; three have become local leaders in national legislative efforts to gain permanent legal status for Guatemalans and Salvadorans. The campaign can be read as a parable about the political participation and power that can emerge from immigrant communities.

Can emerge—but how? This is a particularly important question, given that from 1990 to 1997, citizenship applications surged by 700 percent. It is part of the American romance to assume that these new citizens will be eager participants in American political life. But studies have shown that absent strong organizing efforts, the newly naturalized are less likely to participate politically and less likely to register or vote than their US-born counterparts.

Of course, voting is only a small part of political participation, in many ways the easiest one. So the fact that Workplace Project members, almost none of them citizens, were able to go so far makes an even stronger case for the organizing model out of which they emerged.

The lesson of the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act campaign,

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and the Workplace Project's experience in general, is that successful organizing of immigrant workers and the beginning of their journey to political participation takes several levels of work. This process begins with education, moves on to mobilization, builds power through strong institutions and must link up with other efforts across potential dividing lines to have real impact.

§ *Organizing immigrants starts with real citizenship education.* If we believe that our political system is broken, we cannot justify feeding it wholesale to immigrants as if it worked. Learning about the Founding Fathers may help immigrants pass the test, but unless classes teach the realities of power and politics on the one hand, and the idea of participation as a right worth fighting for on the other, they do immigrants a disservice.

This idea is not new. The Highlander center used it in the civil rights movement; citizenship schools did it in the early days of the United Farm Workers; popular educators do it in Brazil and Haiti and India. But such an approach has reached few of the thousands of classrooms where immigrants prepare for citizenship around the country today.

§ *Education must lead to action.* To engage fully with the political system of the United States, immigrants need to discover its open doors and butt heads against its obstacles, but course participants will not burst spontaneously into action. At the Workplace Project members invite participants in each Workers Course to join ongoing organizing efforts just as the course is ending. By signing up for the next meeting of the committee to organize spot pickets or the domestic workers cooperative committee, members have the chance to put their knowledge into practice, while building the skills and experience they will need over the long haul. Where classes are not held at a workers center, they need to be linked to other community organizations and coalitions and to union locals whose campaigns can use the support of the immigrant graduates.

§ *Action must be tied to internal organizing to build strong institutions.* An individual campaign will win or lose. People join because it affects them and usually leave when it's done. But a stable organization out of which such campaigns are run permits the lessons learned in each campaign to feed back into future efforts; the leadership developed to become a resource for the next stage of organizing; the power built to augment the strength of the next campaign; and the creation of an "organizing culture" in a community to lead to consistent opportunities for analysis and change.

A powerful factor in one campaign's success was immigrants' insistence that they be taken seriously as workers and political actors.

Workers centers can do all these things, but they face a number of challenges, in addition to their constant struggle for funding. First, because they cannot negotiate collective-bargaining agreements on behalf of their members, they cannot protect them from arbitrary firings or guarantee them concrete economic benefits, as a union does. Without immediate, tangible gains, it is hard to maintain member participation outside of classes and campaigns.

The Workplace Project tries to overcome this in several ways. It provides constant learning opportunities, so that members feel that the more time they spend at the center, the more they develop their skills. It offers a wealth of opportunities for action, running several organizing efforts on different fronts that give members experience with media work, writing, public speaking, planning and carrying out projects, and other tactics. It offers members the opportunity to build meaningful power within the organization. Workers committees are the training grounds for leadership of campaigns and of the organization as a whole, so there is no limit to how high committed members can rise within the organization. The Workplace Project also offers legal services on labor issues, a notary, access to a bank account, photo ID cards and letters of reference. Members who might otherwise fall by the wayside stay in touch, because they want what the organization offers. Less tangible but equally important, members participate so as to be part of a larger community that gives social and political richness to their lives. Even with all this, maintaining a high level of worker involvement is hard.

A second challenge for workers centers is to figure out how to provide these benefits and services in a way that encourages rather than undermines strategic organizing. Traditional service provisions—be it to naturalize or to recover wages—can reinforce a message of dependence ("You need a professional to take care of this for you"), decapitate the potential leadership of an organizing effort by resolving problems outside the group and short-circuit the need to organize. In addition, a center can come to rely on cases that people bring in off the street as the sole guide to their choices about organizing targets and issues, rather than building a more complex strategy.

The Workplace Project has struggled with these issues. Now, workers who come to its legal clinic meet first with an organizer, not a lawyer. The organizer works with the whole group of affected workers whenever possible to design a range of tactics to tackle the problem—picketing, media work, group pressure to negotiate. Taking a matter to court may or may not be part of the strategy. Equally important, the legal services are explicitly linked to taking the Workers Course and to membership, so while their individual case is moving along, the workers are moving also—from a sense of isolated victimhood to a different image of themselves as part of a long line of immigrants who have collectively fought for better working conditions. They have a new command of labor law, a variety of organizing strategies at their disposal and membership in an organization through which they can put all of this into action. A worker who was not paid ends up fighting both for her own wages and for the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act.

A third challenge for workers centers is building power. How can such small organizations without a stable funding base grow to the point where they have a strong and coordinated impact on labor conditions? Part of the answer lies in the relationship between workers centers and the labor movement, although this has sometimes been a difficult one. Some centers were founded by workers who had been burned by their experiences with unions. Others started out working with the labor movement but felt that the unions first co-opted the leadership they had fought so hard to build and then pulled out after a campaign lost, leaving

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the workers centers the target of workers' frustration.

The Workplace Project continues to explore avenues for a positive relationship with local and international unions. To make this possible, unions must resist the temptation to borrow a center's cultural, linguistic and local organizing expertise in the heat of a campaign, only to retreat when it is over. If a workers center helps to organize a winning union campaign, it should receive a share of the resulting dues collected through payroll deductions. A good relationship takes time as well as money. Only long-term work on issues of interest to the membership of both organizations will cement the partnership.

Another part of the answer to the question of power lies in building links across racial, ethnic, geographic and issue lines. The workers center model of deep-rooted organizing can win local victories, but few problems these days can truly be solved at the local level. Likewise, very little can be resolved by and for one community without creating problems for others if they are not part of designing the solution. Centers such as the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, which organizes Korean and Latino workers in the restaurants of Los Angeles's Koreatown, are leading the way in this regard.

Are the Workplace Project and its fellow workers centers a "movement"? Not yet, but like undercurrents in Mississippi in the forties before the civil rights movement and in California in the fifties before the United Farm Workers started organizing, they may be the sprinkled seeds from which one can grow. And the route they are traveling is both surprising and time-honored. As a Workplace Project member from El Salvador said to a member from Colombia as they rushed through the fluorescent-lit underground pathways below the New York State legislative buildings, "When I crossed a tunnel under the border five years ago, I didn't think the next tunnel I'd find myself in would be this one."

That's a road we want to put more people on. ■

TO GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, POLICE, NOT THE STORY OF A STRIPPER AT A COLLEGE FRAT.

What Does Rape Look Like?

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER

PETER ZIERLEIN

Last February 27, in the gray hours of a Saturday morning on the grounds of the University of Florida in Gainesville, before even the most die-hard bookworm would be trudging toward the library or cafeteria, a terrified woman ran down Fraternity Row. She ran past the palmettos and the graceful trees dripping with Spanish moss lining a campus that was briefly notorious in the mid-eighties when a serial murderer gruesomely killed several students. Except for a black shirt that barely fell to her hips, she was naked. She ran until she saw a light at the Theta Chi house, headed for it and banged on the door. When a young man answered, the woman said through tears and panic that she had been raped at the Delta Chi house up the row and needed to call her mother. Her mother came, and then the University Police Department (UPD) arrived. The woman was taken by ambulance to the local hospital, where a forensic exam, a "rape kit," was taken in accordance with federally mandated procedure. She could identify the assailant and his two accomplices, and she wanted to press charges.

Two days later this woman, Lisa Gier King, was arrested by the UPD for filing a false police report and taken in handcuffs from her home. The detective who had helped King less than forty-eight hours earlier accused her of wasting their time, and King went from being a victim to a criminal: Her name was in the papers, she needed a defense lawyer and she owed the hospital for an ambulance ride.

The reason for the UPD's about-face is a nearly four-hour Hellenic opus titled "State's Evidence," wherein King and another naked woman lapdance, grind and simulate sex for a couple of dozen clothed fraternity brothers. Early on in the video, when King is performing with the other dancer, you can hear a man say "don't kiss her," disgust dripping from his voice. Later in the film, King is the sole woman still at the house, the video camera trained on her as she alternately taunts "Bring it on, bitch. Is that all you got for me?" and tussles with a hulking naked man with a shaved head who is pushing his fingers, tongue and penis into her while two "brothers" look on. For a disconcertingly long period of time, her pubic hair is shaved inexpertly with an electric razor while she lies on her back, exuding the sexual excitement of a rag doll. Several times, she gets out from under the guy and straddles him, appearing dominant and confident. King is also heard reasoning with him: "Mike, you know you can overpower me. This is not what this is about." The onlookers provide a running commentary, saying things like, "You know what this is? Rape." In fact, the men use the word "rape" at least fifteen times, about as often as they refer to the woman as "white trash."

Lisa Gier King contends that what at times may look consensual in the video was in fact forced. Not realizing that the camera had been turned off as she was being choked and her life threatened, she told the UPD it was all on tape. She said she felt like she had no choice but to have sex with Delta Chi brother Mike Yahraus, the would-be John Holmes of the video. Ironically, the highly unusual circumstance of having a videotape of the rape

Jennifer Baumgardner is a frequent Nation *contributor and the co-author, with Amy Richards, of* Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future, *forthcoming from Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Research assistance was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.*

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is working against King. One well-known sex-crimes prosecutor told me that the video should make the case unequivocal: Does she seem like she was enjoying herself or not? But the answer here is only "No, not really." The video does not show clear evidence of coercion, and it does show King performing her job as a stripper. It doesn't stretch the imagination to speculate that this hurt her case with the police.

You don't have to be Susan Brownmiller to know that most women who report their rapes are made to walk a gantlet of doubting Thomases—from the police to friends to boyfriends. Although copious books and pamphlets have been published to prepare women to do the right thing—vomit on him, laugh at his penis, kick and make a lot of noise, tell him you have an STD or a murderous boyfriend, bargain with him, do whatever you have to do to save your life even if it means pretending you're making love with him—there is little a woman can do that can't later be held up as evidence of how she might be lying or confused, nutty or slutty. In a new book called, pungently, *Lucky*, Alice Sebold writes about her rape case, which ultimately produced a conviction. Although Sebold was a "perfect" victim—white, 18, a virgin, no drugs or alcohol in her system, wearing baggy clothes and raped by a young black man who injured her severely—at the trial it was revealed that the sergeant who took her original statement didn't believe her story. New evidence of a persistent pattern of police inaction on rape cases emerged recently in Philadelphia, where the *Inquirer* reported on October 17 that since 1981, when the local sex-crimes police unit was founded, hundreds of cases (at least a third) have been "mothballed," with no investigation ensuing from the victim's initial report.

It is the feminists of Campus NOW—and pretty much they alone—who believe Lisa King was raped at Delta Chi.

Besides its indelible association with the rampage of a serial killer, Gainesville is known to be progressive—the "Berkeley of the South," the town that spawned one of the most active arms of women's liberation in the late sixties and early seventies. One of the first campus chapters of the National Organization for Women was founded at UF in 1972, and it is the feminists of Campus NOW—and pretty much they alone—who believe King was raped. "We believe the men of Delta Chi (Mike Yahraus, Leo Yuque, and Anthony Marzullo) were protected and their actions condoned. The woman was punished for her profession (stripping) and for daring to report such men to the police. We demand the men face criminal charges of sexual battery, false imprisonment, battery, conspiracy and facilitation," reads one of their early statements to the press. Even though King's criminal case was quickly closed, Candi Churchill, Campus NOW's 23-year-old president, and the rest of the group have conducted weekly protests against the UPD and the State Attorney's office for the past eight months.

On October 9, they held a speakout across from City Hall, where Lisa Gier King and other women testified about reporting rape and being either disbelieved or criminalized. "Detective Alice Hendon [at UF] said that the rapist had been questioned and released and would not be charged," King said. In her sunglasses, long brown curls, leggings and matching gray top, she looked like a student giving a presentation on criminal law. Only for a few seconds did her voice falter as she began to recount her ordeal. "After seeing only minutes of a four-hour video, Hendon said it showed willing and consensual sexual intercourse. No photos were taken of the rapist and his obvious injuries, none of the other men present in that room were taken in for questioning, not even Anthony Marzullo, the one shown in the video calling it rape."

Ultimately, the charge against Lisa King for falsifying a police report was dropped (according to the State Attorney's office, because it "didn't want to send a message to potential rape victims that you are arrested when you try to report"), and King and six of the fraternity members were charged with misdemeanors—dancing without a license for her and assignation (gathering for the purpose of lewdness) for the guys. The one brother who went to trial rather than selecting a petty misdemeanor plea arrangement was found guilty on three misdemeanor charges by an all-female jury in late November. Largely because of Campus NOW's persistent and radical protest, Dean of Students Julie Sina doled out a harsher punishment to the chapter than was recommended by the seven-man university judicial panel: Delta Chi is suspended until the spring of 2002.

The State Attorney's office says it pursued the participants aggressively and that some measure of justice was had. But a few hours of community service, a misdemeanor on one's record and not being allowed to host keg parties is not the same as facing rape charges. And King's criminal-sexual-battery case is dead. The State Attorney, Rod Smith, concurred with the UPD that there were not facts and evidence to back up the sexual-battery charge. Yet the university police, it appears, investigated only until they saw the video and then ceased to gather the evidence that could have supported King's story.

A civil suit, which King is now preparing, is rich with the possibilities of shining light on the mysterious world of sex-crimes protocol. King was arrested for filing false charges, for example, before the crime lab could have returned the results of her rape kit. Meanwhile, Anne Marie Haber, a medical legal consultant who works with attorneys and rape-crisis centers, points out that a huge percentage of the kits don't arrive at the lab intact, nor are many ER staff trained in the highly specialized gynecology that reveals the microscopic tears and contusions caused when a woman is not consenting. The possibility that the evidence-gathering was not quite pro-victim is high.

Adding to King's problems is that the videotape is now part of the public record, making her an unwilling porn star. According to the press contact at the State Attorney's office, more than 100 requests have been made for the video from as far away as Europe; the vast majority are from private citizens who just want to view "Live Frat Rape," as it's been dubbed by an Internet porn purveyor, from the comfort of their La-Z-Boys. If King was raped, then her case is not unlike that of Linda Marchiano, who as Linda Lovelace was the purportedly nympho star of *Deep Throat*. Marchiano went public in the eighties saying that she was brutally coerced into making porn films by her then-husband,

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Chuck Traynor, and that *Deep Throat* is, in fact, a film documenting her being raped multiple times. By the time she sought to file a civil suit, the statute of limitations for sexual battery had long passed, and because the film was swimming strongly in the "stream of commerce" she couldn't sue to have it removed from the shelves of video stores.

We'll probably never know if Linda Marchiano or Lisa King was raped. The best we can hope for is that King's civil suit—which will be against the fraternity, the three brothers on the video and Detective Alice Hendon—will determine what went wrong with the investigation. It seems that Detective Hendon, who mysteriously retired from the force after this case, was not open to considering King a victim after she saw that the "dancing" consisted of such moves as grabbing a dollar bill out of a supine man's mouth with her vagina. Yet from a feminist point of view, King's behavior on the tape once the alleged rape began—taunting the men, using sarcasm, acting like a badass—could be construed as strategic. In model-mugging and self-defense courses, women are taught to do whatever they have to do to de-escalate the situation, and often the worst thing a victim can do is act like the perpetrator has power. The feminist analysis of rape says that "rape is a crime of power" and, furthermore, that rape almost never looks like a stranger in the bushes attacking a fair maiden. Of course, Lisa King's case proves that the legal system does believe that rape looks a certain way—that it's not the aggressive antics of a down-and-dirty stripper, who was outnumbered but never looked like she was trying to get away. That couldn't be rape, right? ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

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international intervention in Timor or the fact that it did ultimately take place. After reading his letter, I wonder still. (I also wonder whether, if Israel ever did implement a program of expulsion, he would seriously call on its principal armorer to sit tight.)

He and I are further divided by questions of terminology. I am not sure that the term "humanitarian crisis" is quite accurate for the planned pogroms in either Kosovo or Timor. These were deliberate exercises in state-ordered genocide and thus were political crises. Both could have been and were predicted, which is why "contingency plan" belongs in quotes. Both could have been, and were not, averted. But averting either one would have meant a more resolute attitude to intervention. By choosing to take the words "contingency plan" as literal, Chomsky avoids the question of whether the cleansing of Kosovo had actually begun with the Serbian massacre of the villagers of Racak in January 1999. Difference of interpretation is quite possible here, even given the record of the Milosevic regime in Bosnia, and even given its stated intention of reducing the absolute Kosovar population. However, in the eight pages he devotes to Racak and its implications, Chomsky spends most of his time pointing out that the US official on the scene, William Walker, had a dreadful record in El Salvador, before going on to be sarcastic about the relative lack of enthusiasm for matters Timorese. Double standards?

The silly word "benign" doesn't enter into it: These are questions of principle. I support military resistance to Serbian racism and aggression and the landing of Australian and other troops in East Timor, and if it were up to me, both of these decisions would have been taken earlier (with correspondingly large savings on the humanitarian catastrophe account). Chomsky, as far as I can see, opposes the first and rather weirdly declines to acknowledge the second. The traditional interventionists like Henry Kissinger are opposed to both, which makes me doubt that either is a mere power-projection for the New World Order. We appear to be in a new era, where old reflexes serve us less well. However, this does not relieve us of our responsibility to take the side of the victims, as Chomsky once taught me and many others to do.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

RACE MATTERS

Storrs, Conn.

■ The otherwise excellent article by Karen Houppert, "You're Not Entitled" [Oct. 25], fails to recognize that race matters when addressing the impact of welfare reform. She is not alone: Hardly any of the numerous national or state studies of the effects of welfare reform bother to acknowledge the color of welfare recipients.

It is important to emphasize that attacks on welfare recipients most adversely affect impoverished people of color, especially children. The majority of families receiving welfare are African-American or Latino. Health and Human Services statistics show that in May 1999 some two-thirds of TANF clients were families of color. Meanwhile, recently released census figures show that the poverty rate went up (!) between 1997 and 1998 for African-American women heading households with children under 18. For this group especially there was increased need at the same time as states were busy denying people welfare benefits.

The "government lawlessness" Houppert finds running rampant in states' administration of welfare reform is in many instances an expression of "welfare racism"—a term coined by my colleague Noel Cazenave, with whom I am writing a book on the subject. We believe welfare racism played a decisive role in the demise and abolition of AFDC and undercuts the ability of impoverished families of color to function, much less move above the poverty line.

If there is to be a "national progressive agenda around poverty issues," this agenda must address the ways current welfare policies reinforce prevailing patterns of racial inequality.

KENNETH J. NEUBECK

NUCLEAR ARITHMETIC

Oak Ridge, Tenn.

■ Lucky for Harvey Wasserman that he can make a living as a writer, because he certainly would not survive in his job if he had to add or subtract ["Next—McNukes," Oct. 25]. Nuclear power plants today are generally producing power at the same cost as their lowest-priced competitor, coal, but with a lot less pollution. A utility can sell an older plant at a low price because it has already depreciated much of the value. There is a market for nuclear plants, because they are good investments. Wasserman can rant all he wants about safety, but the record speaks for itself: The number of even minor mishaps at US nuclear plants continues to decrease while plant efficiency continues to climb.

DR. THEODORE M. BESMANN

WASSERMAN REPLIES

Columbus, Ohio

■ Lucky for Dr. Besmann that he can make a living in science, because he'd go broke as an economist. Every US reactor owner facing deregulation is demanding a "stranded cost" bailout for its uncompetitive nukes. Then it's dumping these radioactive clunkers at prices often below the value of the real estate on which they sit. Buyers also get access to huge, ready-to-loot decommissioning funds, which balance the fact that electricity from natural gas is everywhere cheaper than nukes. Gutting safety precautions is the only way these plants stay open. The tragedy is that when it comes to reactor mishaps, all it takes is one.

HARVEY WASSERMAN

CORRECTIONS

■ In William Julius Wilson's "Bridging the Racial Divide" [Dec. 20], the last three sentences in the twelfth paragraph should have appeared in quotes and been attributed to Mark Warren. We regret the error. • In Marc Cooper's "Street Fight in Seattle" [Dec. 20]: the president of ILWU is Brian McWilliams. • In Lawrence Joseph's "New Poetics" [Dec. 13]: Michael Schmidt's publishing house is Carcanet Press.

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to law enforcement practices that should not be tolerated in a multiracial society. The prosecutors continued to deny what happened, and three of them were rewarded with judgeships.

If the true story of Hurricane's ordeal had been told, perhaps it could have helped put this country's most recent racial trial, the O.J. Simpson case, in perspective. There's a reason many blacks are suspicious of American justice. It often fails, especially when race is involved. When it does, the media and Hollywood should tell us, so that all of us—not just African-Americans and other people of color—can understand why a predominantly black jury may have wanted to save Simpson. LEWIS M. STEEL

Lewis M. Steel is a New York City attorney.

Iraq Under the Bombs

One year after the Anglo-American bombing of Iraq during Operation Desert Fox the international spotlight has moved on, but US and British bombs continue to fall on targets in the no-fly zones of northern and southern Iraq. In the latest instance, on December 6, thirty "hostile formations" flew over southern Iraq and attacked "Iraqi service and civilian institutions," according to the Iraqi News Agency. But Iraq's "brave ground defenses" intercepted these formations and forced them to flee.

The no-fly zones cover 60 percent of Iraq and extend to the southern suburbs of Baghdad. Nevertheless, in mid-August British and US aircraft hit Iraqi targets outside these sectors. This led France, still basking in the glory of its participation in the US-led NATO campaign in Kosovo, to protest loudly. It worked—the US-British alliance quietly returned to the original parameters of its operation. To cover its embarrassment, the Pentagon announced that over the past eight months the US and British air forces had fired more than 1,100 missiles at 359 Iraqi targets—more than three times the number of attacks made during Desert Fox. That there is no UN resolution authorizing the no-fly zones seems not to bother the Clinton Administration.

In May Britain and the Netherlands jointly prepared a UN Security Council draft resolution to disarm Iraq of its conventional weapons. The draft, which received US support, proposed the creation of a UN Commission for Inspection and Monitoring and demanded that Iraq give its teams "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to any and all areas, facilities, records and means of transportation they may wish to inspect." In return, the UN ban on Iraqi oil exports would be lifted, under strict financial controls, for 100 days at a time.

Rejecting the draft, Baghdad said it would allow UN inspectors only if all sanctions were lifted unconditionally and only for nonintrusive monitoring. Its position remains unchanged. "We say we cannot tolerate the impact of the sanctions and spies at the same time," said an editorial in *Al Thawra* ("The Revolution"), the newspaper of the ruling Baath Socialist Party, on November 26. "But the unjust sanctions...are much easier to accept than the presence of spies and their recurrent and concocted crises aiming to prolong sanctions."

The Anglo-Dutch draft soon met competition from one produced by Russia and backed by China that called for an end to all sanctions and for a less intrusive system of inspection and monitoring. Months of haggling have yet to produce any compromise. The statement by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook that a resolution with unanimous support would be on the Security Council table by mid-December proved overly optimistic. The promised document was indeed produced on December 11, but at France's instigation, the council's current president, Britain's Jeremy Greenstock, postponed the vote. The Anglo-Americans hope that once the December 19 Russian parliamentary poll is out of the way Moscow might prove more pliable.

Differences between the United States and Russia have also emerged around the Security Council's renewal of the UN's $5.26 billion oil-for-food program for Iraq. Among other things, Moscow proposed that the cash limit on Iraq's petroleum exports be removed. Washington disagreed. With no compromise in sight before the November 20 deadline, the Council extended the current scheme by two weeks, hoping that would spur the competing sides to hammer out a compromise.

But Saddam Hussein had different ideas. Instead of accepting the extension, he turned off the oil taps on November 21. The next day, the London Brent oil futures hit $25.90 a barrel (West Texas crude rose to $26.78 a barrel), the highest price since the Gulf War. Saddam then rejected another one-week extension granted by the council, forcing it to opt for the regular six-monthly renewal of the scheme, which he accepted.

While the diplomatic tussle at the UN shows little sign of ending, the Iraqi people continue to suffer. "Don't play the battle on the backs of the civilian population by letting them wait until the more complex issues [of the UN inspections] are resolved," said Hans von Sponeck, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, on the eve of the General Assembly session in September. "Please remove the humanitarian discussions from the rest in order to really end a silent human tragedy."

Iraq has not only experienced an alarming increase in infant mortality but a whole generation of young people is growing up with impaired intelligence because of lack of protein during infancy. According to the latest UNICEF report, the mortality rate among Iraqi children under 5 rose from 56 per thousand in 1984–89 to 131 in 1994–99 as a result of an increase in malnutrition and disease, and the dearth of medicine after the embargo precipitated the collapse of the national economy. That means some 500,000 children have died as a result of the sanctions.

In late October von Sponeck again called for de-linking the humanitarian and disarmament issues. This annoyed Washington and London, which tried to block his reappointment by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. But Annan extended von Sponeck's term for a year, partly because he holds similar views and partly because failure to reappoint him would have upset the remaining three Security Council members. The decline in their diplomatic leverage is the price Washington and London must pay for the bombs they began dropping on Iraq a year ago. DILIP HIRO

Dilip Hiro's latest book is Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians *(Interlink).*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Was Communism Reformable?

ROBERT V. DANIELS

Never in history until the Soviet Union collapsed eight years ago had a great empire gone through such cataclysmic changes and accepted such staggering territorial losses without suffering defeat in a general war. Now the crippled successor state known as the Russian Federation is trying to draw the line to prevent the secession of the small non-Russian minorities who remain under its jurisdiction. But as the former Moscow correspondent of *The Times* of London, Anatol Lieven, argues in *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, Moscow's brutal assaults on the Chechens, in 1994–96 and again now, only underscore the weakness of the new Russia. Was this breakdown inevitable, inherent in the defects of the old Communist system, as the conventional wisdom now has it? Was it the only possible outcome if would-be reformers tried to tinker with the old system? Or was it simply the result of errors or betrayal on the part of the country's latter-day leaders? Could a "third way" have been found between Communism and capitalism? (Lenin, for one, thought not.) Was the subsequent Russian disaster under Boris Yeltsin the fault of the Soviet legacy, or the consequence of new crimes and blunders? Did the events of 1991 amount to a new revolution, intended or not?

Experts have vigorously debated the implications of the Soviet collapse and will long continue to do so. And now the Russian money-laundering scandal and the renewed war in Chechnya have propelled these issues to general awareness at the political level in this country, to the particular discomfiture of Vice President Al Gore, point man for the Clinton Administration in its Russia policy. Naturally, as the Russian question is politicized, it is likely to generate more heat than light. Fortunately, a spate of recent books on the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras, including those under review here, brings light to the subject.

The Soviet collapse was actually a succession of distinct crises. First was the collapse of Communist Party rule, starting with Gorbachev's efforts at democratization in 1988–89 and culminating in the failed coup of the Communist conservatives in August 1991. Second was the breakup of the Soviet Union, or, more accurately, the decolonization of the Russian Empire, consummated by Yeltsin's abolition of the Union (and with it the job of his rival Gorbachev) in December 1991. Finally, less heralded but even more fundamental in its effects was the dissolution of central authority in nearly every sector of the old system, a process set in motion by Gorbachev's reforms but fully realized only in the early Yeltsin years.

The Soviet collapse was actually a succession of distinct crises—the end of CP rule, decolonization of the Russian empire...

How and why the Soviet system actually came to grief cannot be explained solely by social forces or the legacy of the Communist past. Leadership politics and the clashing egos of the major players were decisive. Indeed, the history of Russia over the past decade and a half of transition can readily be told in the stories of two personalities, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, and the implacable rivalry that arose between them. This fateful conflict, recalling the struggle between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky in the twenties, is the stuff of three powerful new books, Archie Brown's *The Gorbachev Factor*, Jerry Hough's *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR* and Lilia Shevtsova's *Yeltsin's Russia*. Gorbachev has updated his own perspective in *On My Country*

Robert V. Daniels, professor emeritus of history at the University of Vermont, is the author of The End of the Communist Revolution *(Routledge) and* Russia's Transformation *(Rowman and Littlefield), among numerous other works on Russia.*

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and the World, already familiar as regards the breakup of the Soviet Union and his "new thinking" on international relations, but fresh and candid in its initial section on the pluses and minuses of the Revolution of 1917.

Archie Brown, Oxford don, dean of British Sovietology and adviser to successive governments, has masterfully exploited the memoir literature made possible by Russia's new freedom to bring his readers inside the inner workings of the Gorbachev regime. The story is a Greek tragedy of rising hopes and cumulative errors, compounded by the mobilization of reform against the reformer that was accomplished by the antihero Yeltsin. Gorbachev, Brown shows, was a complex figure who evolved toward democracy both before and after his by no means foreordained selection as Soviet leader in March 1985. In time, "by embracing ideas that deviated from accepted orthodoxy, Gorbachev altered and undermined that system to an extent far greater than he initially foresaw." The upshot, according to Brown, was that "from the spring of 1989," i.e., from the election of the First Congress of People's Deputies, "the most important defining characteristics of a Communist system, whether structural or ideological, had ceased to apply." Despite all his errors of political and economic judgment, Brown concludes, "Gorbachev has strong claims to be regarded as one of the greatest reformers in Russian history and as the individual who made the most profound impact on world history in the second half of the twentieth century."

As Gorbachev's reforms unfolded, he was torn between rejecting the authoritarianism of the old regime and using his inherited power to put down the Communist Old Guard. In his own reassessment, Gorbachev underscores the task of rescuing the ideals of the Revolution from a Communist system that was "not socialist but totalitarian." Meanwhile, Yeltsin was stealing Gorbachev's most impatient supporters and forcing him to fight an ultimately losing war on two fronts, against the party conservatives on one side and the radical reformers on the other.

Why the vendetta between these two giants of democratization? Brown is one of the few writers to recognize how power-driven Yeltsin's personality was, surpassed in this respect only by Stalin. Brought to Moscow by Gorbachev in 1985 to clean up the city administration, Yeltsin could not bear the slights he felt at the hands of the Communist Party leadership, particularly a neglected event that not even Brown mentions: his failure to be promoted to the Politburo in June 1987. From that time on, Yeltsin did everything he could to sabotage Gorbachev's leadership. He defied the Communist Party, rejected the economic compromise of market socialism and fanned separatism among the non-Russian regions of the Soviet Union in order to enhance his own position as leader of the core Soviet republic, the Russian Federation. (He became chairman of its Supreme Soviet in May 1990 and was elected its president in June 1991.) Gorbachev comments, "The president of Russia and his entourage in fact *sacrificed the Union* to his passionate desire to accede to the throne in the Kremlin." The irony is that when the Chechens claimed for themselves the independence that Yeltsin had endorsed for the major Soviet republics, his answer—not once but twice—was the mailed fist.

After his fall, Gorbachev was asked on Italian TV why he allowed Yeltsin to challenge him so: "I should have listened to those who begged me to send Yeltsin to Africa as an ambassador. But I wanted to give a signal of change, to show that even in our country dissenters could stay in politics. With Yeltsin I ended up as a victim of my own principles."

To extrapolate from Brown's picture, there is a certain analogy between Yeltsin's defeat of Gorbachev in 1990–91 and Stalin's defeat of the moderate Communist Nikolai Bukharin in 1928–29 (following the purge of the Trotskyists in 1927). In each instance, a reformer was confronted by a power-hungry rival who took extreme positions to discredit his enemy and then, oblivious to the consequences, made these tactical commitments ends in themselves. In Stalin's case it was the totalitarian command economy; for Yeltsin it was the free-market utopia in an "independent" Russia.

Brown's book is closely paralleled by that of Jerry Hough of Duke University and the Brookings Institution, one of the most prolific as well as controversial of American Sovietologists. Both see the "Gorbachev factor"—a top leader who rejected ideological dogmas—as the decisive push precipitating the breakup of the old system. They differ in their evaluations, however. For Brown, Gorbachev was an extraordinary success, breaking Soviet politics open through his steps toward democracy. Hough thinks Russia would have been better off following the Chinese model of controlled reform. For him, Gorbachev was a failure who never understood the destructive forces that his over-hasty efforts had set in motion. Discounting Gorbachev's appeals to the "socialist choice" of 1917, Hough supposes that from the time he came to power he had rejected the Communist economic system in favor of the free market, without realizing its practical dependence on rules and authority. Further, he went overboard against the use of force: "Gorbachev had none of the sense that democracy was a state that involves some repression." For his part, Gorbachev still reaffirms the mixed economy, while he abjures responsibility for armed actions against the Georgians in 1989 and the Lithuanians in 1991.

The differences between Brown (and Gorbachev) on one side and Hough on the other highlight the question of whether the Soviet system was in fact reformable, or whether it could only be changed by a total overthrow. Was the old regime under such tension that a serious attempt to reform it could result only in revolution? This is

IN THIS REVIEW

THE GORBACHEV FACTOR.
By Archie Brown.
Oxford. 406 pp. $30. Paper $16.35.

ON MY COUNTRY AND THE WORLD.
By Mikhail Gorbachev.
Columbia. 352 pp. $29.95.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND REVOLUTION IN THE USSR, 1985–1991.
By Jerry F. Hough.
Brookings. 542 pp. $59.95.
Paper $26.95.

REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE: The Demise of the Soviet System.
By David M. Kotz with Fred Weir.
Routledge. 302 pp. $90. Paper $24.95.

CHECHNYA: Tombstone of Russian Power.
By Anatol Lieven.
Yale. 456 pp. $37.50. Paper $16.95.

STEALING THE STATE: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions.
By Steven L. Solnick.
Harvard. 337 pp. $49.95. Paper $18.95.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY.
By William E. Odom.
Yale. 523 pp. $35.

YELTSIN'S RUSSIA: Myths and Realities.
By Lilia Shevtsova.
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 343 pp. $44.95. Paper $19.95.

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Hough's core argument, as he applies Clarence Crane Brinton's renowned model (*The Anatomy of Revolution*, 1938) to categorize Gorbachev as the revolutionary moderate and Yeltsin and his acolytes as the "Robespierres" of the Second Russian Revolution. This, Hough asserts, was a "bourgeois" revolution by members of the Soviet Union's own bureaucratic ruling class (i.e., *nomenklatura*), resentful to find that their amenities of life paled in comparison with those of their Western counterparts. They seized the opportunity offered by Gorbachev's defanging of the apparatus of control and revolted against their own collectivist system in order to appropriate individually all the wealth and property they could get their hands on. Thus, "*nomenklatura* privatization," and the Russian pun on *privatizatsiya*: *prikhvatizatsiya*, meaning "grab-it-ization" (as the noted economist Marshall Goldman has translated it).

It may nevertheless be too facile to think of events in Russia since 1985 as a new revolution. The regime that fell was, after all, a product of the Revolution of 1917, and both Gorbachev and Yeltsin harked back to earlier stages of the revolutionary experience. Gorbachev found his model in the early Soviet years, before Lenin created the one-party dictatorship and Stalin the command economy, while Yeltsin, as I have recently shown ("The Process of Revolution in Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism*, May–June 1999), looked back to the semiconstitutional czarism of 1905. Meanwhile, the bureaucratic elite survived all the commotion and simply found a new setup to advance its interests.

Revolution or not, Hough's concept of a social transformation at the death of Communism is supported independently by the work of David Kotz and Fred Weir and of Steven Solnick. Kotz is an economist at the University of Massachusetts and his collaborator, Weir, reports from Moscow for Canadian and other Commonwealth papers. They conclude: "The Soviet system had been dispatched, not by economic collapse combined with a popular uprising, but by its own ruling class in pursuit of its own perceived interests." Solnick concurs, on the basis of a close study of the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), together with the military draft and job assignments of university graduates. Cynicism and opportunism, he finds, undermined the Soviet control system and rolled ahead unchecked when Gorbachev tried to decentralize: "Soviet institutions were victimized by the

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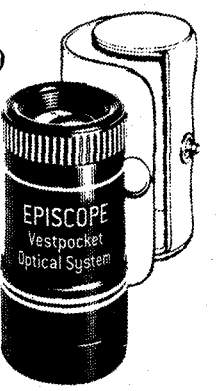

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organizational equivalent of a colossal 'bank run,' in which local officials rushed to claim their assets before the bureaucratic doors shut for good."

We still do not know enough about how *nomenklatura* privatization was accomplished. Kotz and Weir are broadly schematic, relying heavily on the work of the Russian sociologist Olga Kryshtanovskaya; they focus on the political backing that the new business elite gave to Yeltsin. Solnick's examples come from the fringes. We do not get from these authors a full explanation of the rise of the financial empires of the new oligarchy (detailed, however, in the book *Kapitalizm*, by *Business Week* correspondent Rose Brady) or of the now familiar export of plundered Russian capital to Western banks. And at the other extreme, there is not enough appreciation of the millions of competent and hardworking Russians who continue somehow to make their particular institutions, public and private, work.

What lies after this grim story of miscalculations? Will political parrying make as much difference as in the eighties and early nineties?

This gap is partially filled by Paul Christensen of Syracuse University. His new book, *Russian Workers in Transition: Labor, Management and the State Under Gorbachev and Yeltsin*, faults both leaders for taking advantage of the industrial workers to start their respective programs and then betraying them. Left with no effective independent organization, the workers raised only sporadic protests. But looking back, Gorbachev's pursuit of social democracy, however bungled in its execution, "would have provided a better basis for an ultimately successful economic transition and for an eventual consolidation of democracy than did the policies of Yeltsin." Gorbachev, Christensen holds, was more realistic about the Russian statist heritage than the politics-only "transitologists" who advised the Yeltsin regime on the basis of their observations of Latin America.

In any case, the Hough-Kotz-Weir-Solnick thesis of an uprising by the bureaucrats against the bureaucracy is hard to deny, though it has been overshadowed by the more spectacular struggles on the political plane. It might be understood by analogy with the economics of inflation. Soviet society in Gorbachev's last years suffered from an "inflationary overhang" of unspent rubles that could not find enough goods at controlled prices. De-control by the Yeltsin government in 1992 unleashed one of the most severe inflations in history and contributed to a state of economic anarchy and mass impoverishment, from which Russia has not yet recovered. Paralleling this, in the sphere of institutional relationships, was the rising thirst among the Soviet bureaucracy—the "New Class"—for personal affluence and aggrandizement, a sort of "ego-ambition overhang," if you will. Gorbachev's curbs on arbitrary central authority and his toying with privatization and marketization in the so-called Five Hundred Days Plan of 1990 signaled to this elite that the time was ripe to seize everything in sight. Given Russia's inadequate framework of law and financial accountability to contain the new robber-capitalists, the price the country had to pay was the chaos, crime and corruption that persist today. Yeltsin's subsequent decrees on privatization, it would appear, only ratified what was already going on.

In this perspective, the Soviet system was not so much overthrown as it was pulled apart without much change in the elite. This was literally true for the non-Russian republics, as they went their separate and usually undemocratic ways, sanctioned in 1991 by the abolition of the Union. But it was also true for the overall Soviet institutional structure, notably the centrally planned economy, thrown into chaos by the removal of direction from above, without a matrix of laws and rules like the framework that evolved to support the capitalist order in the West. The Polish political scientist Wisla Suraska, in a very original work, *How the Soviet Union Disappeared*, stresses the territorial and institutional dissolution latent in the "anti-modern" character of Communist "despotism." In the course of this general breakdown, state functions that by their nature depended on public financing suffered especially, and this included the military.

The decline and fall of the Soviet military during this era of reform and revolution are recounted in great historical and technical detail by retired Lieut. Gen. William Odom, former director of the intelligence-gathering National Security Agency and a longstanding expert on Russia. No fan of Gorbachev, whom he considers "duplicitous" and to the end a "Leninist," Odom nevertheless depicts a military deprived by Gorbachev of the centrality it had enjoyed under both czarism and Stalin's "garrison state." It was wounded by arms-reduction measures and paralyzed by the liquidation of its ideological raison d'être. Democratization disrupted discipline and triggered a revolt against the draft, especially in the non-Russian republics. Squeezed between a reforming government and a restive society, the Soviet military was well on its way to "disintegration" even before the 1991 coup and Gorbachev's fall (the end point of this tale; Odom does not go into the Chechnya debacle of 1994–96, detailed by Lieven, which only proves Odom's thesis). Odom holds that *perestroika* fractured the Humpty-Dumpty of ideological legitimacy on which he believes all forms of authority in the old regime depended. As noted by Robert Strayer of the State University of New York, Brockport, in his short survey of these events, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?*, "the declining 'self-legitimation' of the Soviet elite" paralyzed their will to hang on by force, but this did not prevent their turning to peaceful theft.

If revolutions can be explained after the fact, it is much harder to foresee them, and it is impossible to specify their timetable. Everyone agrees that the Second Russian Revolution (if it may be called that) was started by Gorbachev personally. It was thus a true accident of personality in history, both in his determination to reform the Soviet system and in his narrow margin of victory in 1985. "To ignore Gorbachev's choice-making is a fundamental error," Odom writes. The collapse of 1991 was equally accidental, set up only by the Gorbachev-Yeltsin feud plus the latter's exploitation of nationality separatism, and made irreversible only by the conservatives' failed coup, which blew away the whole psychological basis of authority. Had it not been for these fortuitous events, there is no reason to dispute the contention of Hough and others that at least for a time Russia could have pursued the Chinese path of reform under dictatorship without the societal breakdown that democratization permitted. "The USSR was killed...by politics, not economics," and above all by "Soviet Academicians concocting fantastic reform plans," observe Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovich in introducing their collection of essays by insiders of the Gorbachev era (*The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System*).

The Chinese outcome would have satisfied many in Gorbachev's entourage, including his number-two man of the early years of *perestroika*, Yegor Ligachev, his middle-of-the-road prime minister, Niko-

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lai Ryzhkov (Hough's hero), and even the putschists of 1991. These scoundrels, Gorbachev appointees all, were mainly interested in preserving the Union, and never mentioned Communism or even socialism in their pronunciamento. Their real creed was the Russian imperialism that was the underlying ideology of the post-Stalin rulers, as Yitzhak Brudny shows in his *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991*. However, the course of authoritarian, centralist reform, Chinese-style, had already been ruled out by the democratic steps Gorbachev had set in motion at least three years before the coup attempt and by the loosening of restraints over the property-hungry *nomenklatura* from that time on.

What if Yeltsin had provided a different kind of rallying point for the democratic reformers as well as the rebellious officialdom, and had not been so fixated on personal power and revenge against Gorbachev? Brown thinks that if Yeltsin and Gorbachev had collaborated, they could have saved the Union and averted the economic and strategic disruption that its breakup entailed. Likewise there was no compelling reason, other than politics, to subject Russia to economic shock therapy in 1992—more shock than therapy, as even Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott later acknowledged. Shock therapy was as callous and stupid as Stalin's collectivization of the peasants, thinks Esther Kingston-Mann of the University of Massachusetts, Boston (*In Search of the True West: Culture, Economics, and Problems of Russian Development*).

Were wrongheaded Western advice and financial lures a factor? Perhaps, by encouraging Yeltsin's pro-capitalist advisers, notably Yegor Gaidar, the engineer of shock therapy. Still, as Kotz and Weir point out, the free-market blunder was overwhelmingly supported at first by the same Russian Parliament whose later unhappiness caused Yeltsin to dispatch it with gunfire in October 1993. Ultimately Yeltsin has to bear the responsibility, even if he hardly understood what he was doing.

If as president Yeltsin had used the immense authority he earned in facing down the 1991 coup to curb the individualistic ambitions of the *nomenklatura* instead of egging them on, Russia's transition could have been a lot less bumpy. Under Gorbachev, Russia appeared to be headed toward some sort of social democratic mixed economy, the goal he retrospectively endorses. Whether anyone could have sustained this course against the disintegrative forces of the *nomenklatura* revolution is another question. Evidently none of the political actors at the time recognized what was really happening.

In the actual event, Yeltsin was Yeltsin, and in the name of anti-Communism he gave free rein to the movement of grab-itization and the formation of the robber-baron financial oligarchy. It is a sad saga of lost opportunity and democratic betrayal, chronicled with acute objectivity by Lilia Shevtsova, who is a Russian political scientist with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow and in Washington. Contrary to Western wishful thinking, Shevtsova holds, Yeltsin was never a democrat but a "demagogue" to whom "power is more important than life itself." She even likens him to Lenin—"the goal of power justified the means."

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Indeed, Yeltsin made no bones about this instinct when he wrote, "I act as I see fit." The result was "a regime in which elements of democracy, authoritarianism, post-totalitarianism, delegative democracy, bureaucratic authoritarianism, oligarchic rule, sultanism, and even monarchy are intertwined in sometimes strange ways." "Delegative democracy," by the way, comes from the work of Guillermo O'Donnell on Latin America: "Whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit."

Still, Yeltsin's power was never as absolute as that of his Bolshevik predecessors, though the czarist-style Constitution he imposed in 1993 scarcely restrained him. He was limited, on the one hand, by the pitiful state of central authority that he had capitalized on to gain power—another "revolution from above," according to Shevtsova. On the other hand, his own state of physical and mental health repeatedly got in the way. After every crisis, Yeltsin has gone into an alcoholic depression, and well before his re-election in 1996 his physical health deteriorated besides. For the past couple of years he has been manipulated by the "Family," his entourage of relatives, staff and financial supporters. He is incapable of governing, except to intervene on occasion to fire ministers who arouse his jealousy or cannot make his will reality.

What lies ahead after this grim story of leadership miscalculations that abetted an empire's decline and fall? If the immediate past is any guide, the politics of individual ambition and personal rivalry will continue to play a decisive but unpredictable role. Last summer the new coalition of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and key regional leaders seemed hard to beat democratically, either in the parliamentary elections now taking place or in the presidential election next June. The Yeltsinite Family faced the uncomfortable alternatives of either being dispossessed or resorting to force. Now, ironically, the renewed war in Chechnya has pumped up the popularity of Yeltsin's new prime minister and anointed successor, Vladimir Putin. Putin may not even need to proclaim a state of emergency as the putschists did in 1991.

All such machinations aside, will the hazards of political thrust and parry make as much difference for the fate of Russian society as they evidently did in the eighties and early nineties? Shevtsova, the most present-oriented of the authors reviewed here, sees only more of the same: a standoff between a fractionated political establishment and a victimized populace that is hard to mobilize for any protest, let alone a "social explosion." Kotz and Weir speculate about various capitalist alternatives, all incompatible with democracy, and hope (despite their analysis) that the workers will support a return to the "socialist reform project." Christensen concurs: The future will be either "Russian Peronism or social democracy."

But radical developments are discounted by most writers. Anatol Lieven, for example, concludes, "There seem few reasons to fear a new revolution, which is what would be needed in order to replace the new elite and transform the nature of the state and economy." Market socialism might be the preferred outcome, but it is hard to detect the forces that could actually get Russia back on that path. Perhaps the most that can be expected of any conceivable Russian leadership is to subject the financial oligarchy and the managerial elite to the normal discipline of a law-governed state and make their wealth serve society. But given Russia's record of the past dozen years, even that achievement would be a long and difficult task. The question now is, is *post*-Communism reformable? ■

What Price, Palestine?

MICHAEL YOUNG

PALESTINE: De Jerusalem à Munich. By Abu Daoud (Muhammad Daoud Audeh), with Gilles du Jonchay. Editions Anne Carrière, Paris. 741 pp.

The plan to take Israeli athletes hostage during the 1972 Munich Olympic Games was conceived at a cafe on the Piazza della Rotonda in Rome, in the shadow of the Pantheon and the tomb of Raphael. Sitting at an outdoor table were three PLO officials, Salah Khalaf, Faqri al-Umari and Muhammad Audeh, whose respective *noms de guerre*—Abu Iyad, Abu Muhammad and Abu Daoud—carried, until not so long ago, considerable weight. The sole surviving member of the triumvirate, Abu Daoud, recently published the first volume of his memoirs, in French and Arabic.

The product is exceptional, thanks largely to Abu Daoud's divulging of original information. When secretive former operatives confess, they often admit to more than politicians, who generally regard the truth as unsafe. Abu Daoud, once considered among the more sinister of Palestinian officials, believes he can admit to what he did because he has mouthed the proper password: He accepts the Oslo process, though with reservations. As he sees it, his book serves, in this context, a useful design: "Our past is what it is. However, one must also know what constitutes it, so as not to repeat the same errors in the future, or the same tragedies. That is why I also consider that a real peace cannot be built on information that remains obscure to this day."

For the moment, the information has yet to appear in the United States. Abu Daoud's memoir is to be published by Arcade Books, with a publication date loosely set for next summer. Craig Offman, writing in the online magazine *Salon*, noted that the book's preparation has already agitated the publishers, Richard and Jeannette Seaver, who claim that on a visit to Israel they were shadowed. The pair has reported receiving daily telephone calls and letters from people outraged that the mastermind of Munich might have his say. One fears that if the work proves too much of a nuisance, the American public may be spared the affront of ever contemplating it.

Of course, that outcome would be downright insolent, given that just about every leading player on either side of the Israeli-Palestinian divide has something to conceal. In the constellation of transfigured PLO militants, one need not reach so elevated a summit as Yasir Arafat to gauge the magical powers of redemption provided by the willingness of Palestinians to live in a smattering of West Bank and Gaza hamlets. Recall that Israeli President Ezer Weizman made time at the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan to shake the hand of Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and formerly one of the most ferociously intransigent of Palestinian leaders.

But Munich was singularly reprehensible, many might persist. The quarries were, after all, civilians and, worse, athletes. In that case something must be done to dis-

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cipline Abu Daoud's close friend Mahmoud Abbas. He is the gentleman who placed his signature on the Oslo accords, watched by millions of moved television viewers, who couldn't have imagined for one second that it was he, Abu Mazen, who financed the Munich operation. Oddly, there was no fracas when his memoirs were issued.

Nor was there dissent when Ariel Sharon published his martial reminiscences. And who can forget Shimon Peres? Surely the fact that his cannoneers killed more than 100 civilians at Qana during the Grapes of Wrath operation against Lebanon in 1996 merited an irate phone call or two ordering his *The New Middle East* banned from public-library shelves. One can move on, deeper into extravagance. But that would be missing the point that the reconciliation favored by Palestinian and Israeli leaders today requires large measures of amnesia.

It is more surprising that Abu Daoud's memoir received an ambiguous welcome from commentators in the Arab world. Although excerpts were published in prominent Arab newspapers, including *Al-Hayat* and Beirut's *An-Nahar*, and though Abu Daoud made the rounds of the region's television stations, there was palpable restraint toward his account of the Palestinian-Israeli contest, which was, hitherto, *the* daily political preoccupation in the Arab world.

This reserve was the result, primarily, of three things: The memoir has only just been translated into Arabic, which means it is too early to evaluate accurately its impact. There is also something inherently incomplete in the first of a two-volume work: The reader is not allowed to determine how Abu Daoud's actions affected the ultimate destiny of the Palestinian nationalist movement—acceptance of statehood in the territories occupied in 1967. That will be the substance of the second volume, though now one is compelled to read a narrative with no ending.

The third problem is that Abu Daoud may be paying the price for the subtle and perilous transformation of the Palestinians into the pariahs of the Arab world. By the mid-eighties, the Palestinians were on their own. One difficulty was relevance. Banished from Lebanon after the 1982 Israeli invasion, the PLO watched as the Syrian leader, Hafez al-Assad—unwilling to be drawn into another costly war with Israel—engineered a rift in Palestinian ranks. In late 1983 Arafat, having been ejected from Damascus, attempted to regain a foothold in northern Lebanon, if only to remain close

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to Israel. Assad put a stern end to the adventure, however, when he had the PLO leader turned out of the port city of Tripoli and packed off to distant Tunis.

The *intifada* arrived in time to save the PLO. Though the organization's expatriated leadership commandeered the revolt, it was mostly the youths of the West Bank and Gaza who served as cannon fodder. These were the years in which the Palestinians living under occupation began developing a combative identity of their own, a development Arafat and his comrades would learn, uneasily, to contend with. By the time the PLO reached the nadir of its fortunes—when Arafat, in a drive toward self-immolation, sided with Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War—the organization had already sensed that the only political lifeline available was negotiations with Israel.

It was an exotic feature of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that only when the PLO lost its élan did it become an attractive interlocutor for the Israelis. The Israelis took their time but eventually grasped that the *intifada*, though it had abated by 1990, represented an irreversible phase in the Palestinians' struggle for their national rights. Henceforth, the fight—regardless of the weaponry used—would be carried to the occupied territories, even to Israel proper, an objective that the PLO commanders, among them Abu Daoud, had pointedly failed to achieve in the seventies from their exile in what was known in the jargon of those years as the "confrontation states."

It was to Arafat's credit that he successfully transformed the lessons of the *intifada* into something he could bring to the negotiating table. Abu Daoud's memoirs are most useful, however, in measuring the time it took for the PLO to focus its attentions on the single issue that always mattered: liberation of Palestinian territory. Until virtually the eve of the Madrid conference in October 1991, Arafat and his acolytes were ensnared in senseless sideshows: in Jordan, then in Lebanon and, finally, on the wrong end of the Gulf War.

Much of Abu Daoud's book is taken up with the Jordanian interlude. After having joined the PLO in the mid-sixties, the former schoolteacher moved to Amman, where he came to lead the Palestinian militias, an auxiliary force of several thousand men that protected the refugee camps. Abu Daoud takes us through a blow-by-blow account of the growing animosity between the Palestinian organizations and the Jordanian regime. This culminated in full-scale warfare in September 1970. Though the Palestinian organizations were severely weakened, King Hussein had to wait until October 1971 to complete their eviction from the kingdom.

Abu Daoud's revelations about the conflict with Jordan are predictably partial. They will also become indispensable reading for anyone interested in the PLO's decision-making during the ascending crisis with the Hashemite regime. Though Arafat is depicted as a Neville Chamberlain–like figure, capitulating at the drop of a hat to Jordanian provocations, he comes across as far more sensible than Abu Daoud. Arafat understood that a war with Jordan would alarm most Arab states and isolate the PLO regionally.

The account of the confrontation in Jordan leads Abu Daoud to an interpretive impasse. He is highly critical of Palestinian organizations that openly sought to undermine Hussein's regime, arguing that it was their machinations that allowed the king to vindicate his showdown with the Palestinians in September 1970. At the same time, Abu Daoud admits, rather inconsistently, that he too favored overthrowing the monarchy, but through different means. While his quibble may be with strategy rather than objectives, he never adequately explains how the appropriation of Jordan would have helped regain Palestine.

The case for the Munich hostage takeover is similarly unsettling. Though the Israelis bombed Palestinian civilians in Lebanon with careless abandon in the early seventies, it was high-profile operations like Munich that Western governments remembered, much to the PLO's detriment. Even certain Palestinian officials legitimately wondered how hostage-taking would recover occupied land, particularly at a time when the PLO officially rejected—to the displeasure of many Arab governments—the notion of establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Munich was carried out by the Black September organization, a secret tributary of Fatah, the PLO's largest faction. It was established in 1972 by Abu Iyad, Abu Daoud and Abu Mazen. Even before its founding, however, a major operation ordered by Abu Iyad was carried out in its name: the assassination in November 1971 of Jordanian prime minister Wasfi al-Tal. Al-Tal had not only masterminded the PLO's ouster from Jordan—in the process manipulating and antagonizing Abu Iyad—he was trying to set up a pan-Arab structure that would have limited the military autonomy of the Palestinian organizations.

Abu Daoud goes into considerable detail to correct long-held misperceptions of the Munich operation. His account was persuasive enough for the Germans to issue an

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arrest warrant on him. He admits to having planned Munich and maintains that the person long thought to have directed the operation, Ali Hassan Salameh, had nothing to do with it. Rather, Salameh, who became Arafat's liaison to the CIA, had established a separate Black September, which, though it carried out several attacks in Europe, was never regarded as the real thing.

As Abu Daoud reconstructs the Olympics operation and its aftermath, one of the motives for his memoir becomes apparent: not so much to defend his legacy as to rectify it, to remind readers of what it is he actually did and did not do. Abu Daoud wants to delay anonymity, a justifiable incentive for a public confession, but he also does not want to be remembered for the wrong reasons. That is because in 1973 the Jordanian regime almost rewrote his story.

In February of that year, Abu Daoud was arrested in Amman and held for several months. During this period he endured torture and a death sentence, later reversed by King Hussein on the advice of the head of the Jordanian intelligence services, Abdel Rasoul Kilani. The Jordanians forced Abu Daoud to admit to a version of the Munich operation that, paradoxically, absolved him of responsibility while blaming others. This had the dual effect of discrediting Abu Daoud among Palestinians and sending the Israelis in the direction of men who had not participated in the hostage takeover. Indeed, in April 1973 Ehud Barak—now Israel's prime minister—led a commando team to Beirut to murder a trio of Palestinian officials, supposedly to avenge Munich. Not one of them, Abu Daoud maintains, had been involved in the Olympics affair.

While Abu Daoud was in prison, Black September seized more hostages, this time at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Khartoum, to secure his release. Two American diplomats, Cleo Noel and G. Curtis Moore, as well as a Belgian counterpart, were shot after being detained for hours. With unusual timorousness Abu Daoud dispatches the story in a few lines. He may now know that Noel and Moore were part of an exceptional group of Americans who were willing to accept the Arab world on its own terms. He does not know, however, that the wife of one of the men traveled to Beirut not long afterward and, in response to a remark that the Arab world must have seemed a bitter place after her husband's assassination, observed that perhaps the explanation for that senseless act had to be sought in the squalor of the Palestinian refugee camps.

Doubtless Abu Daoud would value the story. For he spent too long a time buffeted by the misreadings that have shaped the recent history of his people. ■

DANCE

DTH at 30

LYNN GARAFOLA

In 1969, a year after the death of Martin Luther King Jr., Arthur Mitchell, the country's leading African-American dancer, founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem. A Harlem native and graduate of New York's High School of Performing Arts, Mitchell was a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, which he had joined in 1955, quickly becoming one of the most interesting of the company's neoclassical princes. His goal in forming DTH was both to prove that black dancers "could do ballet" and to provide them with an outlet to perform.

DTH was not the first all-black ballet company, but it came into existence at a time when civil rights was still a galvanizing idea and large-scale money for ballet was available from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Unlike its short-lived predecessors, such as the First Negro Classic Ballet (founded 1947) and the New York Negro Ballet (1954–59), DTH was well positioned not only to survive but to flourish.

All the signs were propitious. The company's co-founder was Karel Shook, Mitchell's ballet teacher and mentor to scores of black dancers. On the board sat George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein, the artistic director and patron extraordinaire, respectively, of the New York City Ballet. Among the benefactors were Peabodys, Rockefellers and Plimptons—names long associated with philanthropy for blacks. The Ford Foundation subsidized the company's affiliated school, which functioned both as a neighborhood arts center and a professional training academy. DTH gave its first extended engagement in 1970, at Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts; made its official debut at New York's Guggenheim Museum in 1971; and soon afterward shared the stage at a New York City Ballet gala. Among DTH's early repertory were Balanchine classics like *Agon* and *Concerto Barocco*, the rights given free of charge by the choreographer.

Dancers flocked to the company's Harlem studios. For black ballet dancers the sixties were not a good time. True, John Jones had danced with Jerome Robbins's short-lived Ballets U.S.A., and Christian Holder and Gary Chryst were rising stars of the Joffrey Ballet. For black women, however, opportunities were limited for the most part to guest appearances in works outside the standard repertory. Thus, in 1960 Mary Hinkson appeared with the New York City Ballet in Balanchine's *The Figure in the Carpet* and in 1966 with American Ballet Theatre in Glen Tetley's *Ricercare*. The previous year ABT had engaged no fewer than four black women—Judith Jamison (later Alvin Ailey's muse), Carmen de Lavallade, Cleo Quitman and Glory Van Scott—for Agnes de Mille's *The Four Marys*. None left with a contract. As Jamison would discover during her brief tenure with the Harkness Ballet, few roles were deemed suitable for a black woman.

Over the years DTH underwent many changes. The neoclassicism that initially linked it stylistically to the New York City Ballet declined in importance. There were forays into the nineteenth-century repertory (most notably, a "Creole" *Giselle* set among pre–Civil War free blacks in the Louisiana bayous), revivals of early-twentieth-century works (including Bronislava Nijinska's *Les Noces* and *Les Biches*) and later Americana classics such as Agnes de Mille's *Fall River Legend*, Ruth Page's *Frankie and Johnny* and Valerie Bettis's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. And, increasingly, there were dramatic ballets (such as William Dollar's *The Duel* and John Butler's *Medea*) and works by black choreographers, including John Alleyne, Garth Fagan, Robert Garland, Geoffrey Holder, Louis Johnson, Alonzo King, Vincent Sekwati Mantsoe, Dwight Rhoden, Billy Wilson and Mitchell himself.

DTH was born at the height of the dance "boom," when grants were plentiful and touring earned a big chunk of the company's income. Then came the Reagan years. Government and foundation funds dried up; costs rose steeply; audiences, hit by recession, downsizing and rising ticket prices, declined. In 1990, faced with a projected $1.7 million deficit, DTH laid

Lynn Garafola writes criticism for Dance Magazine. *Her most recent book is* The Ballets Russes and Its World *(Yale).*

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off all fifty-one dancers as well as other personnel for six months. American Express and the Lila Wallace–*Reader's Digest* Fund came to the rescue with $1 million each. But even with the economies DTH then undertook—forgoing expensive productions (such as its acclaimed Nijinska program), focusing on the new, "contemporary" works that tour sponsors wanted—by 1995 it was forced to reduce its fifty-two dancers to thirty-six, not enough to perform *Giselle* or its popular *Firebird* without being augmented by students. The use of apprentices and nonunion "floaters" was behind the 1997 walkout that ended with the dancers being guaranteed only thirty weeks of work during the second contract year. Today, even as the dance world recovers from the effects of Reaganomics, stability continues to elude DTH.

This fall DTH celebrated its thirtieth anniversary with a two-week season at New York's City Center, its first appearance in midtown Manhattan in five years. Dozens of company alums were on hand, and there were balloons and cheers when they took a bow onstage after the last performance. Alas, the season itself was less festive. With thirteen principals and eight soloists (fewer than one-third the number of musicians hired for the season), the company's dance ranks are much depleted. "Guest artists"—retired former company members—shored up the roster, along with a corps of twenty-three student apprentices from the DTH school. Equally diminished is the repertory. The nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century classics are gone, along with the early Americana works. Only a smattering of Balanchine remains. Mostly there are works of recent vintage by black choreographers that seem designed to prove that DTH is really black, that it can "dance black" and wow a black audience—in other words, perform the dances of African, Caribbean or vernacular inspiration that black audiences will pay to see. This is a far cry from Mitchell's founding vision.

Typical of this market-driven trend is Robert Garland's new *Return*, a glitzy work to songs by James Brown and Aretha Franklin that looks like a music video danced on *pointe*. Another is *South African Suite*, presented in an expanded version this season, which has wonderful music by the Soweto String Quartet and choreography (by Mitchell, Augustus Van Heerden and Laveen Naidu) in which the dancers strut their stuff in sleek workout wear. More interesting is Dwight Rhoden's *Twist*, the season's other premiere, which combines fabulous spectacle (lighting and projections by Michael Korsch) and contemporary energy. Dramatically, the piece has its flaws; it goes on too long and needs dynamic variety. But it does challenge the dancers, not because they have to work in other idioms but because Rhoden wants them to look like classicists. Although trained as a modern dancer, he revels in the stretched feet, harmonious line and clean footwork that create a ballet "look."

In the seventies and eighties DTH scrupulously maintained its Balanchine repertory. Now, only *Prodigal Son*, in which Duncan Cooper gave an exciting performance as the Son, was danced with an understanding of the choreography and its style. (Cooper, a real dramatic talent, was also outstanding in the revival of Michael Smuin's Native American epic, *A Song for Dead Warriors*.) *Bugaku*, a Japanese court ritual led by the retired Ronald Perry, one of the original company's most accomplished technicians, and Simone Cardoso, another former DTH member, was an embarrassment. As for *The Four Temperaments*, of the present company, only Donald Williams, who danced the role of Phlegmatic with elegance and a fine, understated passion, displayed an understanding of the ballet's style, a combination of postwar "cool" and nervous intensity.

Thirty years after DTH's founding, its mission is very much up in the air. In 1999 it is no longer necessary to prove that blacks can dance classical ballet, nor is DTH the only venue where classically trained blacks can dance. There are any number of major US companies with black principal dancers, and the opportunities continue to grow, especially for men. The fact that this is today the case is a measure of DTH's accomplishment both in developing black talent and in making a place for it in ballet.

Over the years DTH has also developed a substantial black audience, a notable achievement given that the ballet audience, even in places like New York, remains heavily white. For the most part, however, this new public is not a ballet or even a dance audience. It is an audience for black dance, and it wants to see work that looks black, that shows a little bit of "attitude," takes a cook's tour of the African diaspora or does a classy version of MTV or Broadway—the kind of dance the Alvin Ailey company has made its trademark. For this overwhelmingly middle-class and upper-middle-class audience—itself largely a product of the post–civil rights era—race is not so much a physical attribute as a cultural identity. In a sense, the cultural tastes of the DTH audience make it increas-

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ingly difficult for the company to maintain a classical identity.

Rather than cater only to these tastes, Mitchell might want to make good on the idea that DTH has become, as its publicity states, "a multicultural institution." By this I mean expanding the company's artistic or cultural profile beyond its current largely racial identity. Although DTH would remain a company committed to developing black dancers and black classical choreographers, its "black" works would be merely one part of a much broader repertory embracing a small number of nineteenth-century classics and a larger number of twentieth-century ones. In other words, DTH should remake itself as a truly national company along the lines of the old Joffrey Ballet or the current Miami City Ballet, with its mixture of Hispanic-oriented works and classical repertory.

To do this, however, DTH needs dancers with solid training and strong technique. This season much of the dancing was depressingly mediocre. Although Kellye Saunders and Andrea Long turned in some excellent performances, few of the women have the technical equipment to join even the corps de ballet of a major national or regional company. This does not speak well for the teaching that takes place in the DTH studios.

In a century that has seen history-making ballet companies fold in less than a decade, surviving thirty years is quite an accomplishment. By now, Mitchell knows pretty much everything there is to know about running a company. It's what he does best—what he did in the years before DTH became an institution that had lost its raison d'être but that nobody could allow to founder. Maybe the time has come for him to return to the idea that inspired him so long ago, to re-create his vision of a company of magnificent black classicists.

Note: In February, DTH goes to the West Coast, where it will perform in Berkeley and Seattle, among other venues. A tour of New York State is to follow in April. ■

FILMS

Lord High Executioners

STUART KLAWANS

TOPSY-TURVY • MAGNOLIA

He looks like a pear that's going bad. Tall, corpulent and much the worse for gravity, W.S. Gilbert (Jim Broadbent) sags his way through *Topsy-Turvy*, scarcely stirring except to drawl a sarcasm. His opinion of his mother? "A vicious woman who bore me into this ridiculous world." His contribution to lunchtime conversation? "Oh, horror, horror, hoooorror." His outlook, as one of his brightest operettas debuts at the Savoy Theatre? "As good as any condemned man can expect."

Though born to rhyme "scowl" with "jowl," this man has been wed in his career to someone thoroughly airy and cordial, with a Frenchified smoothness: Arthur Sullivan (Allan Corduner). To attend a Savoy premiere, Sullivan may have to rouse himself from a sickbed; after the performance, he may collapse. But while he's conducting the orchestra, white gloves flashing, he's all smiles, commanding others to take pleasure by exuding it himself.

In 1884, these two men undergo a professional break to match their personal rupture. The story of that near divorce provides the crisis for Mike Leigh's charming, brilliant, seemingly effortless *Topsy-Turvy*. The resolution, dreamed up by Gilbert and Sullivan themselves, is *The Mikado*, the creation of whose charmed brilliance, at the expense of much effort, is the subject of the film's second half.

Topsy-Turvy explores a relationship between antithetical collaborators, whose art (as the title suggests) turned Victorian England upside down, making it into a fantastic Japan. But the film is big enough to contain other dialectical relationships as well: authors and producers; star performers and chorus members; the imperial center and the outlying regions of the world. Ultimately, most touchingly, *Topsy-Turvy* is about barrenness and fecundity, which is to say men and women—men who cloak their spirits in the busy work of art, women who smother their natures and try to keep smiling.

But this is starting to sound serious. I'd better tell you quickly about the candy and oysters.

If you've followed Leigh's career, you know he takes care to feed his characters. (*Life Is Sweet*, which also starred Broadbent, would be the best example.) In *Topsy-Turvy*, he has decided that Sullivan, upon first meeting onscreen with Gilbert, should offer his partner a piece of candy. All through the subsequent conversation, which is tense with disagreement, the two men suck and slurp. Similarly, when the actor George Grossmith (Martin Savage) has to renegotiate his salary with the Savoy's impresario, Richard D'Oyly Carte (Ron Cook), he makes the mistake, just before, of gorging on oysters.

Instances abound of degustation and frailty. To give only one further example, Sullivan romps in a Paris bordello with a Mademoiselle Fromage. All right, a few more: I could also mention the "little problem" of alcoholism that plagues Leonora Braham (Shirley Henderson), the Savoy's ingénue; the festering leg on which Jessie Bond (Dorothy Atkinson) gamely supports herself while playing the gay young flirt offstage and on; the interrupted work session, with rejected snack, that puts Gilbert into a towering rage against his wife, Kitty (Lesley Manville), then sends him hurrying to the dentist. Working for the first time in the mode of period drama, Leigh builds *Topsy-Turvy* out of a hundred such observations of character. They are the past on a human scale—which means the film's people don't knock around loose amid the costumes and sets.

The latter, by Lindy Hemming and Eve Stewart, are as sumptuous and faithful as you could desire, whether they show the "reality" of a Victorian interior or the "fantasy" of *The Mikado* in performance. (When staged scenes burst from the narrative, shining with the light of cinematographer Dick Pope, you might think the gold-leaf heaven of religious painters had been proved to exist, and was much goofier than promised.) Gilbert's home, like the man himself, is dark and heavy. A few sparks can be found in the place, in the form of newfangled gadgets—a telephone, an electric doorbell—but even these function as instruments of gloom, since they help Gilbert keep his distance from people. Sullivan, as you'd expect, has more aestheticized tastes. Whistler seems to have visited his bedroom recently, to paint a peacock on the door.

The Sullivan of *Topsy-Turvy* is the most pleasant of men—and perhaps the most unfeeling. Early in the film, in perfect self-satisfaction, he speaks of the great music he owes the nation. At the end, more pleased

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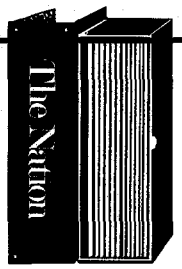

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with himself than ever, he sweetly pats his lover (Eleanor David) and dispatches her to end a pregnancy he would find inconvenient. The film's Gilbert, of course, is impossible. But Leigh gives him this much credit: When Kitty, at the end, delivers to him a stunning bedside monologue that sums up her sense of futility, Gilbert's face seems to crumple from within.

But I'm sounding too serious again—a mistake that Kitty wouldn't make. So, in the spirit of topsy-turvydom, I will close with the middle of the film.

At the moment when Gilbert, alone in his study, hits upon the idea for *The Mikado*, he does something remarkable, which he does at no other time in the picture: He moves. Picking up a Japanese sword, he mimes his version of a Kabuki battle. Suddenly, Jim Broadbent's body escapes the pull of gravity. It can pose on one leg; it can swivel and dance. The glummest of Victorians has abruptly become the Lord High Executioner. He's set free—and so, for the moment, are you.

By coincidence, *Topsy-Turvy* opens in New York on the same day as *Magnolia*, the new film by Paul Thomas Anderson (*Boogie Nights*). Both pictures are, in my mind, contenders for Best Film of the Year. Both are ensemble productions, rather than star vehicles; and both take place in the world of show business. (The core set of *Magnolia* is a TV studio, where the live broadcast of a game show is in progress.) But since nothing in *Magnolia* happens "by coincidence," I might have to dream up some spooky end-of-the-millennium theory to account for the double opening.

While waiting for inspiration to strike, I'd better just describe the events. In crude terms, *Magnolia* is a 24-hours-in-LA movie, in which disparate characters knock around and intersect. Immobile in the center of this action is a wealthy older man (Jason Robards), dying of cancer, who asks his nurse (Philip Seymour Hoffman) to locate his estranged son. The son (Tom Cruise) turns out to be a strutting, leather-clad TV pitchman for himself: a vendor of videotapes and daylong seminars, in which he preaches about male conquest of the female (otherwise known as the "sperm receptacle").

Meanwhile, a famously avuncular game-show host (Philip Baker Hall) is visiting his daughter (Melora Walters) to inform her that he, too, is dying of cancer. Scarcely bothering to wipe the cocaine from her nose—it's about eight in the morning—she screams obscenities at him and orders him from her apartment. At the same time, in another part of LA, a seriously self-involved actor (Michael Bowen) is impatiently driving to school his young son (Jeremy Blackman), the hard-pressed star contestant on the game show.

To judge from the books he carries, the boy is a student of odd phenomena, and of events that collide in such striking ways that more than coincidence seems to be at work. He'd want to know that a former quiz kid (William H. Macy), who "once was smart and now is just stupid," has lost his job this morning and is feeling exceptionally desperate; that a good-hearted but inept cop (John C. Reilly) has just met the game-show host's daughter and is willing to ignore the vast evidence of substance abuse in order to ask for a date; that the dying tycoon's young wife (Julianne Moore) is driving around town collecting her own stock of controlled substances, for purposes yet unknown.

I can tell you all this about *Magnolia*; but then I have to stop. The events in the film are ultimately so outrageous, and yet are prepared for so well, that I can neither point toward the climax nor write my way around it. I am like a geographer of Colorado, sworn to secrecy about the Rockies. Worse: Though God does not give you a broad wink when you drive across the western border of Kansas, Paul Thomas Anderson keeps signaling to the audience, in ways I can't fully describe and yet can't ignore. He even has the nerve, midway through the film, to wave a sign in front of you, bearing the film's ending in plain characters. Let those who have eyes read.

Here's as much as I can licitly say: *Magnolia* takes as its theme the sins of the fathers visited upon the children. ("Use your regrets," Robards croaks, again and again, in the guilt-stricken monologue that gives the film its moral center.) The style is virtuosity itself. (Anderson, single-handed, justifies the invention of the Steadicam.) Each actor gets at least one great scene to play; and the performances are all so rich that Tom Cruise, giving the big star turn that's called for by his role, seems at the same time to be just another member of the ensemble.

What conjunction of the planets made possible *Magnolia*, in combination with what anomaly of film-world economics, I cannot guess; nor have I figured out the meaning of its advent side-by-side with *Topsy-Turvy*. So, instead of speculating on these insane complexities, I will dwell instead on simplicity. *Magnolia*, for all its virtuosity, ends with the blossoming of a single smile. The film's final meaning is that plain, and that moving.

Go, please, before I break down and tell you more. ■

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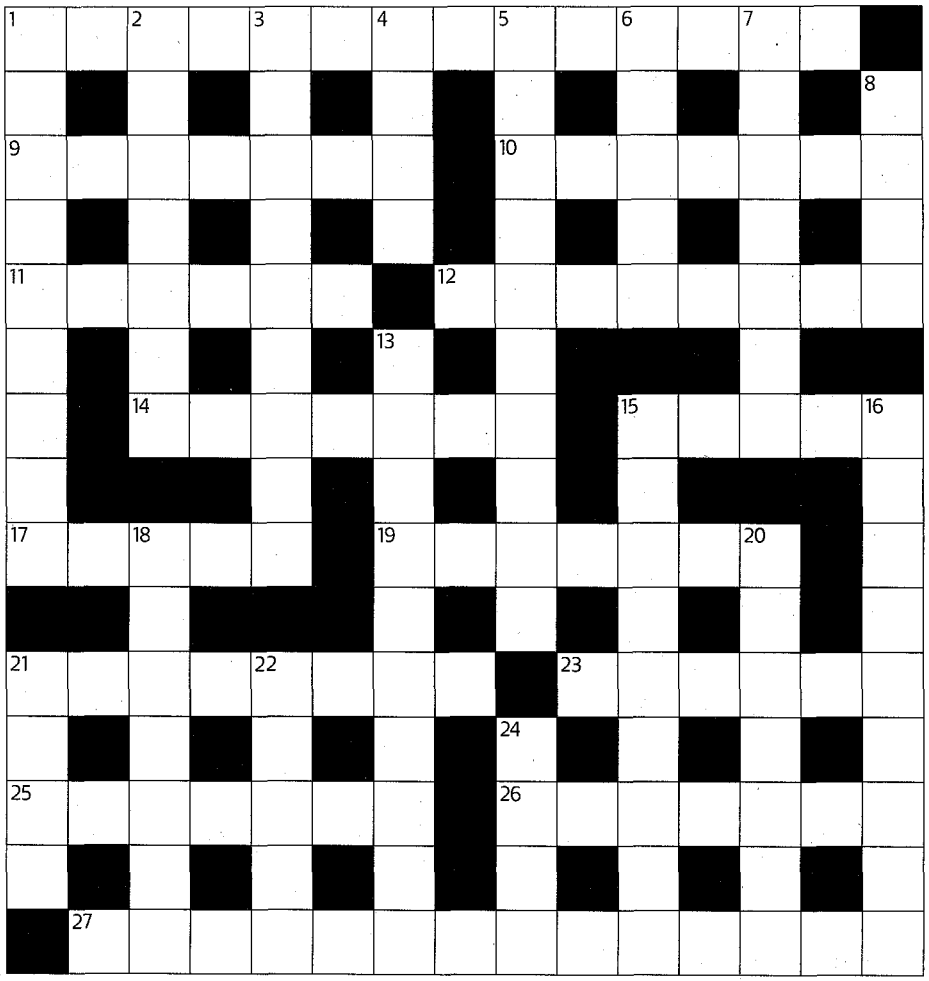

ACROSS

1 Owing to other people, whatever it is, is their business! (4,10)

9 and **10** He or she used a common credit card to rush ahead—and may improve the way you look. (7,7)

11 Gone back around Colette's heroine, one hears, for a seasonal drink. (6)

12 One black sock and one white might be part of the animism at church. (8)

14 Is it something in the garden that caused Fido to get up? (7)

15 and **17** Is the subject of Bonheur limned this way, or might it be a little buggy? (5-5)

19 Hurries about but once commonly found behind the women of style. (7)

21 They probably have only good things to say about the ones lying nearby. (8)

23 Just the bird to complain about! (6)

25 Kept from coming in with what the diamond expert hopes to get. (7)

26 What to ask for at the pub, if the mail is in—for someone like Paul. (7)

27 Shop more than once, with recent botheration, and little light if things are like this! (14)

DOWN

1 Feeling down, just because the right key wasn't? It's part of the media, indeed! (9)

2 Not a top mark, somewhat bedraggled—yet boasted of it. (7)

3 You might make a sling at the bottom of a little bed over a weight made by Whitney. (6,3)

4 This isn't really "cool!"—just "crazy!" (4)

5 Twain isn't likely to come across with a line that comes soon after. (4,2,4)

6 Pluck the strings idly using a short piece of waste thread. (5)

7 Does one have to go out before one is able to do it? (2-5)

8 Might it measure your chin, in a way? (4)

13 One usually doesn't seek such asylum, as it is commonly called. (5,5)

15 Mrs. Clinton loses fifty and comes somewhat short, having certain debts, which might appear funny! (9)

16 It involves a runaway pair that haven't yet been hitched properly. (9)

18 From the first to last, I'm on a crooked hut, to find a different angle. (7)

20 It goes back and forth, being close to let out, in a way. (7)

21 Certainly not a hard clue, depending on the way some take things. (4)

22 Very little things, like a cat in the middle of it. (5)

24 Johnny spent a long time at it—which is only reasonable. (4)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our Web site at www.thenation.com/print/hints.

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TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

The biggest surprise on this innovative compact sound machine...is the price!

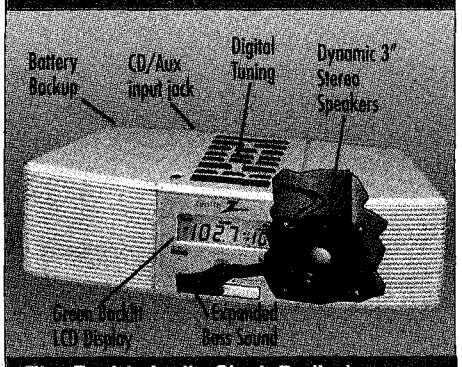
Zenith Audio, a leading electronics manufacturer, designs a "Small Footprint," "Big Sound" stereo system and drives the price below $100.

by John Jameson

If I leaned back slowly in my chair with my eyes closed, listening to the haunting melody of a Mozart symphony. The acoustics were flawless, and the room was soon filled with full, rich stereo sound. From the crisp highs of the flutes to the tooth-rattling bass of the kettle drums, the music was crystal-clear and powerful. I could distinguish the distinct sounds from each individual musician, and as the orchestra reached the finale I almost fell out of my seat from the awesome force of the music. As the music faded, I leaned forward and hit a button on the stereo clock radio. I had a concert to go to that night—it was time to check the weather.

Ultimate sound machine. Zenith Audio has developed a Digital Stereo Clock Radio that boasts the acoustic quality and practical features of stereo radios four times as expensive. You'll be amazed at the sound quality and powerful bass you get from a radio this small and this affordable. This stereo radio features an 11-key handheld remote control and an input jack for CD players or other audio sources.

Compact Speakers with a Big Sound



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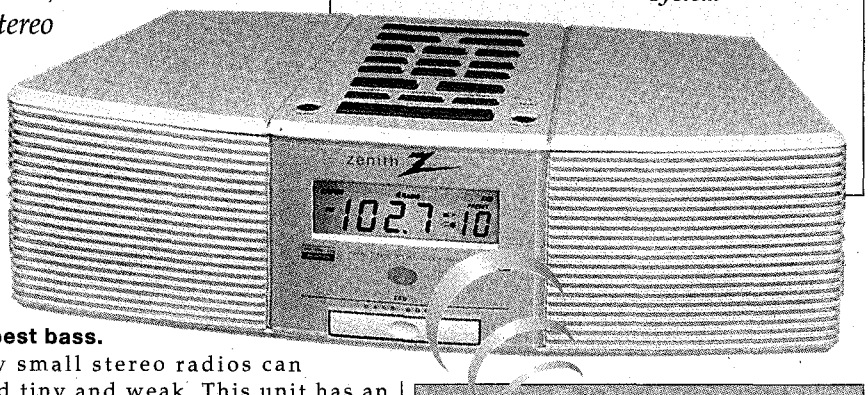
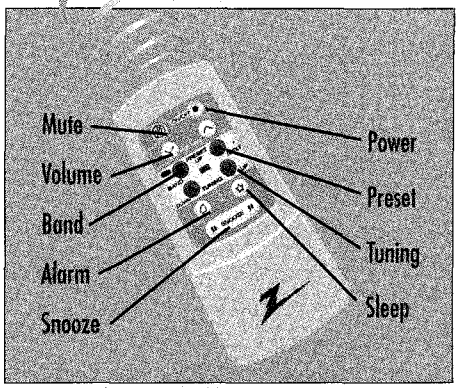


The best bass. Many small stereo radios can sound tiny and weak. This unit has an exclusive EXB button for expanded bass performance. It intensifies the lower tones for CD or FM stations, giving you rich, full and powerful stereo sound. If you want to listen to the stereo in private, there is a headphone jack on the side of the unit.

Loaded with features. You won't find a tabletop stereo with more added options. The AM/FM radio features digital tuning for pinpoint reception and crystal-clear sound. The STEREO indicator allows you to tune in to the stereo signal. It also picks up TV and WEATHER signals with 13 TV channels and 7 Weather channels, so your Zenith Audio Clock Radio is a great source of news, entertainment and information. You can program the unit's memory for 37 preset stations, and the tuning buttons can operate either manually or in an automatic search mode.

Practical functions. The backlit clock has several alarm functions, so you can wake to either radio, TV, Weather or a buzzer. The sleep timer allows you to fall asleep to up to 90 minutes of music, TV or weather and then shuts off automatically. In the morning, if you need a few extra minutes of sleep, press the SNOOZE bar on the control panel or on the remote. The radio or alarm tone stops for 10 minutes and then sounds again. The process can be repeated several times as required. The unit's battery backup system will maintain the time, alarm and preset station memories in the event of a temporary power interruption. There is even a low battery indicator so you'll never oversleep in the event of a power failure.

Factory direct risk-free offer. You can spend hundreds of dollars more on a stereo radio, but why do it? We get the Stereo Clock Radio direct from Zenith Audio and pass the savings on to you. This product comes with a one-year manufacturer's limited warranty and Comtrad's exclusive risk-free home trial. If you are not satisfied for any reason, simply return it within 90 days for a full "No Questions Asked" refund.



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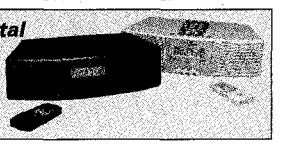

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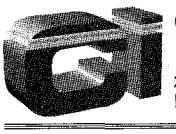

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